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"MARIE WAS AT WORK ON A MINIATURE OF ROBESPIERRE WHEN JAFFRAY ARRIVED."

Page 160.

6/24/13

WHEN GREEK MEETS GREEK

A TALE OF LOVE AND WAR

By

JOSEPH HATTON

AUTHOR OF "BY ORDER OF THE CZAR," "UNDER THE GREAT SEAL," "CIGARETTE PAPERS," "THE BANISHMENT OF JESSOP BLYTHE," ETC., ETC.

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WHEN GREEK MEETS GREEK.

CHAPTER I.

A FUGITIVE.

FROM the chaos of a bloodthirsty revolt that made itself heard in cries of despair and the clamour of battle, there suddenly started into the light of Marie Bruyset's lamp the fugitive Jaffray Ellicott.

"Hush, mademoiselle," he said, as she rose to her feet. "I will not harm you."

"What do you want?" the girl exclaimed, her hand upon the handle of the door.

"Sanctuary!" he replied, blowing out the light and seizing her as he spoke.

"Help!" half cried the girl, the remaining half of the exclamation being stifled by the fugitive pressing his hand over her mouth, that was far too pretty and sweet for such rough usage.

"I will not harm you, mademoiselle," he whispered, his breath coming and going in gasps.

He bolted the door. She made no struggle. There was something reassuring in his voice and touch. A fugitive sure enough, and in mortal peril, judging from the shouts of execration that followed him, to pass on, however, and become a distant murmur. He was only a youngster, but he held the girl with the grip of a man.

Carried out of the way he was going by the human tide of marching men, with pikes and fusils, into the storming of the Tuileries, he had had many a narrow escape. Once, when he might have saved himself, the figure of Count de Fournier, tossed hither and thither

like a gallant ship with streamers flying, held him a fascinated spectator. All remembrance of the mission which he had received from this daring friend of the Throne had been knocked out of him. When at last there was a lull in the storm and Sansculottism was plundering its dead, Jaffray bethought him of his interrupted mission, now too late in the day for fulfilment: he had become an object of animosity amongst a mob of the hunted and the hunters. Good fortune, however, flung him aside into the darkness of the Rue Barnabé, while the howling mob passed on. Projected from a human tempest into the calm of an unsuspected creek, he caught sight of Marie Bruyset's lamp, climbed a rain-spout, and from its grotesque gargoyle swung himself upon a friendly balcony among the picturesque buildings of the Rue Barnabé, and here he was.

"Believe me, I will not harm you," said the fugitive, now recovering his breath, but denying the girl a similar privilege, for he still kept his strong young hand over her protesting, if silent, lips, "but you must be quiet. I am hunted by a pack of wolves, though I am the veriest sheep; if I release you, will you keep silent? Nod your head if you mean 'Yes.' I am very sorry to be so exacting."

She nodded her head. He removed his hand.

"You are very rough," she said, "and have no right to bring me into your troubles."

"I will not; only let me remain a few minutes and I will be gone."

"Permit me to light the lamp," said the girl.

"No—for heaven's sake," said Ellicott, straining every nerve to catch any further sounds of the return of his pursuers. "I am not afraid to die, but my life belongs to others."

Distant noises of bells and guns and murmurs of far-away voices broke upon the silence of the garret, but there was nothing strange in this. So long as the street below was quiet, the fugitive felt that for the time being he was safe; and Marie Bruyset had become accustomed to the "immeasurable Briareus wrestle" that was going

on around the Rue Barnabé, situated as it was between the Pont Neuf and the Rue St. Honoré, and, from her long attic window under the roof, disclosing glimpses of the Seine and the Palais de Justice. Between the Rue Barnabé and the Seine a network of courts and alleys and dark thoroughfares straggled to the Pont Neuf, and finished there in a higgledy-piggledy complication of little shops and stalls doing a miscellaneous trade in roasted chestnuts, pancakes, second-hand books, quack medicines, light drinks, and heavy pastry.

Early on that fatal morning of the 10th of August, 1792, the squadron on the Pont Neuf had withdrawn itself from royal duty and admitted bands of "black-browed Marseillais" and bellowing patriots from St. Marceau to join the sections of St. Antoine and the other federates of the insurrection, summoned by the tocsins of St. Roch and St. Germain l'Auxerrois and the storm-bell of St. Jacques de la Boucherie. All day Marie had heard the rumble of the storm, with intervals of crash, and riot, and thunder. All day she had remained indoors, warned by her father, and advised also by her neighbours. All day long the attack on the Tuileries. All day long the massacre of the devoted Swiss. All day long the hail of death, butchery of the defenceless, mutilation of the dead; only pausing when the day itself died out, Patriotism of the severest continuing even then to hunt its wounded game and stab it to death in ditches or drown it in the Seine. But Marie Bruyset could not know nor even guess at the horrors of that black-letter day in the calendar of the French Revolution.

CHAPTER II.

JAFFRAY ELLICOTT EXPLAINS.

"WHAT are you? Who are you? How did you find your way hither?" asked Marie.

"I am a poor devil, mademoiselle, and I came up the spout," he said, with an effort at a carelessness he did

not feel, having just passed through scenes of massacre unparalleled in a civilised community.

The moon, which had been hidden by banks of clouds as portentous as those that filled the moral atmosphere of Paris, sent a cold beam of light into the apartment of the young Frenchwoman, and she saw that her visitor was a good-looking young fellow, dressed in a style something better than the bourgeois; and now that he no longer gasped for breath his voice sounded as pleasantly to her as hers to him.

"I'm a stranger," he said, "and in a tight corner. Forgive me for my abrupt intrusion. My noisy attendants have evidently given me up—for more worthy game, I hope."

"They never entered the street," said the girl, "if they had they would have made noise enough; the Rue Barnabé is not a thoroughfare—it is a 'cul-de-sac,' a back court of old houses; it comes to an end round the corner."

"That's lucky; then they have taken the next turning, no doubt. Allow me to listen a moment at your window."

"Yes, certainly."

"You will not call out?" he said, turning upon her, quickly.

"I trust you," she replied, "and therefore I remain silent."

"Thank you, mademoiselle; thank you."

He went to the window. It was low and narrow, and looked upon a ledge that in its turn gave upon a slanting roof with chimney-stacks and flower-pots.

The room was a garret, separated from other garrets by a low wall and wooden boxes, in which a few flowers and shrubs were cultivated. The house had once been one of some importance. Now it was divided up into apartments, occupied on the ground floor by the better class of the bourgeoisie, narrowing in the social grade as the stairway ascended until the garrets were reached; and here, beneath the picturesque pointed roof with its quaint balconies and ledges, dwelt poor sempstresses, a shoemaker, a washerwoman, who, however, only treated

fine linen, a modeller of statuettes, and others earning their living from hand to mouth. Their rooms were cut off from each other by stone walls or wooden partitions. Taking them altogether they were a happy community; though of late they had begun to be afraid of each other on political grounds. Marie Bruyset had the best-furnished and most comfortable room among the attics. It was spacious, well kept, and, though humble, with plenty of evidence of good taste.

"Thank you, mademoiselle, a thousand times thank you," said Ellicott somewhat effusively, after listening intently for any demonstration in the street. "The wolves have passed, as you say. If you will allow me to draw the curtains over the window, you may light your lamp."

"You are very kind," said Marie, in something of a sarcastic tone.

"I would like to be," said Ellicott, now almost at his ease, and breathing freely for the first time during a long and terrible day that had been literally a dance of death.

"I am sure it was very condescending of you to permit me to have a light in my own room. But you may draw the curtains."

"I accept your gracious permission," said the young fellow in his best French, and with a flourish of his cap. If it had sported a feather, the feather would have swept the floor in the most courtier-like fashion.

He drew the curtains well over the long, low, small-paned window. Marie struck the steel and blew into the tinder box.

"Nay, mademoiselle, permit me," said the youngster, stooping over the girl and blowing upon the smouldering tinder a blast that fetched an almost instantaneous blaze, and the lamp was soon all aglow.

"That's how Cupid starts his flame when he finds two hearts——"

"Less stony than ours," said Marie with a laugh, "but this is no place for Cupid and no time; Mars or the Furies are more to the purpose; but let me look at you."

She faced him, to see a lithe, well-built fellow of four or five and twenty, about her own age, with a frank open face, that was slightly disfigured by a bruise on the forehead and a scratch or two upon the cheeks. His eyes were grey, and looked straight into her own. His lips were firm and well defined, his face pale with undisguised anxiety, and his dress—which bespoke the student or secretary rather than the "ouvrier"—was a good deal torn and disordered in his struggle from the clutches of the mob. Furthermore, she noticed that he was a foreigner; anyhow, she felt at once that he was not a Parisian.

"You are little more than a boy," she said, "with all the assurance of a grenadier."

Jaffray stroked his youthful moustache and smiled.

"Rather a ragged grenadier," he said, "a trifle knocked about, eh?"

"A scratch or two," she said.

"They scratched some poor wretches deeper than the marks they have left on me," he replied. "Ah, mademoiselle, it is awful to see defenceless men torn to pieces. Wolves, did I say?——but there, I must not distress you further. Can I get away by this door?"

He walked across the room, and tried the only door in sight. It was locked and bolted.

"It is no good locking the door if one leaves the window open, is it?" she said, smiling. "You had better sit down a little while; since you have found sanctuary, give the priestess time to protect you—a few minutes at least."

"Thank you, mademoiselle," said Jaffray, still swinging his cap.

"You are not a Frenchman?" she said, placing a chair for him.

"No," he replied, seating himself, with his eye on the door.

"A Gascon, perhaps?"

"No."

"A Swiss?"

"No."

"Not an Austrian?"

"Is it very bad to be an Austrian, mademoiselle?"

"I believe it is."

"Then, my dear mademoiselle, I am not an Austrian."

"You are younger than your manners."

"Thank you, mademoiselle."

"What had you done for the people to set upon you?"

"The people, mademoiselle, is a villainous, murdering, cut-throat, blood-stained crew of sexless beasts—the people!"

"You have a graphic vocabulary, monsieur, but you would do well only to think in it; if you were older you would not use it in conversation."

"Thank you, mademoiselle: the brutes should have known me; I serve in their cause."

"Oh, indeed; then you are not an aristocrat?"

"I am an Englishman, mademoiselle: is that worse? Then I will be an American truly, which I am."

"You have the accent of a foreigner; your manners are French."

"Thank you, mademoiselle; I feared you would think them horrible; but you are as good as you look, and forgive a rudeness that was not intentional. May I ask, have you the key to your door?"

"Yes, here it is," she said, taking up a large key from the mantel, near the stove which was fixed in what had once been a fireplace. "Why do you ask?"

"Some one passed the door stealthily a moment since," he said.

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure," Jaffray replied. "One's senses of sight and hearing are sharpened when one is hunted."

"Apprehension often makes its own sights and sounds," said Marie, stepping to the door and listening for a few moments, and then shrugging her shoulders as she remarked, "I am too near the roof for loiterers on this floor, and my character is too well known to invite surveillance."

"I noted a face near a lower window a few doors

away as I caught sight of your balcony and sprang for it," he said.

"Imagination, surely, or the hue-and-cry would have been raised on your track."

"But you have friends here all around you, have you not?"

"I hope so; I think so," said Marie; "one assuredly who has power enough to pinch any neighbour who should venture to assail me, be assured of that, monsieur."

"I hope you may never need his aid, mademoiselle."

"Amen to that," she said; "but have no fear, you will not be molested in my room. In case of danger I have other means of concealing a friend in need; and when the moment is opportune I will escort you to the street."

"Thank you," said Jaffray, beginning to feel more and more at ease under the influence of the words and manner of his hostess, who was, however, a good deal of a puzzle to him.

"What had you done before the mob set upon you?"

"As you advise me to be cautious, may I know my questioner before I answer?"

"My name is Marie Bruyset; many know me—everybody in the Rue Barnabé."

"It is a pretty name," said Ellicott.

"I am glad you like it."

"And if you wouldn't think it impertinent, I would add that it belongs to a pretty face, now that the light enables me to see my hostess."

"You did not care whether she was pretty or gruesome a quarter of an hour ago; half an hour since you had never seen or dreamed of her."

"A man's a coward when he's running away. I never ran away in my life before; but I'd have run a league or two with ten times the pack behind me to have found sanctuary here. I think I must have dreamed of you in some of my fanciful moments."

"You were not very polite to the owner of the retreat."

"It was boorish, I admit, to lay my rough hand upon your mouth; I hope to atone."

"Indeed," said the girl, with a coquettish glance from a pair of dark roguish eyes.

"Yes," he said, smiling.

"How, monsieur?"

"May I show you?"

"No, no, monsieur," she replied, stepping backwards a pace or two. "You may resume your seat and tell me all about yourself; or, what is more to the purpose, take a little refreshment, eh?"

"I am your slave," said the young fellow. "You have saved my life; do with it what you will."

"Very well. Having saved your life, I propose to maintain it with soup and wine, and then it can take itself away to those other persons who belong to it."

Ellicott noticed in the manner of this remark a certain tone of inquiry that, had he known the girl longer, might have been jealousy. He was half inclined to indulge in some high-flown complimentary remark, when the thought of his intrusion upon a young girl in her own room and at night, set up against it the sentiment of gratitude due to hospitality which he was too good a fellow to outrage. Moreover, looking round the haven into which he had been fortunately driven, he noticed that it was a sitting-room and bedroom in one. He was too well acquainted with the curtained alcove of French chambers not to know that the end of the room was devoted to mademoiselle's couch. The covered cabinet close by was clearly her dressing-table. For the rest, the apartment was a sitting-room, quite daintily furnished; nay, more, it was also an artist's studio. This was not shown by anything marked in the way of easels and palettes; but on a large table there were colours of various kinds, in phials and saucers, sundry brushes, and several miniatures evidently in course of production. Upon the walls were a number of engravings and coloured prints, and among them a portrait of the queen, Marie Antoinette, which gave Ellicott courage.

"Then you are friendly to the queen?" he asked, pointing to the portrait.

"I am friendly to the powers that rule," she said, opening the door of the stove, lighting a taper at the lamp and thrusting it into the stove with a few scraps of fuel, which under the influence of a powerful draught soon began to glow, and set the "pot-à-feu" simmering.

"When did you come to Paris?"

"Years ago."

"With your father and mother?" she said, inquiringly, as she busied herself with hospitable arrangements for his supper.

"With General Lafayette and Deputy Grébauval," he said, in a reckless outburst of confidence. "They found me at Washington."

"Found you?"

"A Philadelphian who had fought at Valley Forge under General Lafayette had befriended me. I told him my story. He offered to take me to France and provide for me. The Citizen Deputy Grébauval, who sailed in the same ship from New York, took a fancy to me. The Philadelphian had been a schoolmaster. I was only sixteen, and Monsieur Grébauval made me his clerk."

"The Deputy Grébauval?" said Marie, in a tone of something like pity.

"Yes."

"You liked him better than General Lafayette?"

"No, but Monsieur Grébauval evidently liked me better than the general did."

"And you came from America?"

"Ten years ago."

"And your father and mother? Excuse my questions; you interest me, monsieur."

"My father and mother, alas, were massacred in the revolutionary war, as I suppose I shall be in this French imitation of the colonial insurrection."

"Heaven and the Blessed Virgin protect you!" said the girl, crossing herself.

"Amen!" said Jaffray. "But heaven and the saints,

Protestant nor Catholic, helped us over yonder. I was only a lad of six or seven, so it didn't matter much to me then; but since! I'm glad you have a father and mother, mademoiselle."

"I have no mother; but here is something that is mother and father also when the heart is low and the knees are weak," she said with a laugh that was not spontaneous. "There is hope and courage in a glass of wine, and you need both," she went on, as she drew the cork from a bottle of red wine and poured out a full tankard.

Jaffray watched her with greedy eyes. He had not been bold enough to say that he was faint with hunger and thirst.

"Drink, it will do you good; you have turned pale," she said.

"Your health, mademoiselle!" he said; "and God bless you!"

He emptied the tankard and smiled.

"Here is bread, help yourself; and here is soup; make your supper."

She cut a loaf of bread in two, and ladled from the pot a steaming basin of soup. He fell to it with a will. She watched him with undisguised interest.

CHAPTER III.

A MISSION UNFULFILLED.

WITHIN little more than a stone's-throw Paris had held her first great feast of pikes and guns. The taking of the Bastille was child's play to the storming and overthrow of the Tuileries. From dawn until afternoon the burning and butchery had raged at fever heat. The evening sunshine fell upon sorry corpses, which sansculottes of both sexes turned over and stripped. Human vultures are worse than the obscene creatures of the air. Then the dead-carts began to collect their loads and move in grim processions to the cemeteries,

the sansculottes stumbling homewards with relics of the palace—carpets, clocks, furniture. Less frugal citizens drank themselves to death in the royal cellars; while patriotic souls, above such vanities, continued the work of annihilating such betrayed Swiss as might be making their way towards Courbevoie, or such of their comrades or defenders as might seek for shelter in sanctuaries closer at hand. It had been a day of "Victory" for roused and indignant Patriotism. Jaffray Ellicott had fortunately kept his head and his appetite to good purpose.

"Then you know the Deputy Grébauval intimately?" said the girl, returning to the question of Jaffray's personal associations, and with a marked tone of interrogation in her voice.

"Yes," said Jaffray, enjoying his supper.

"Are you one of his secretaries?"

"He has employed me in various ways."

"They say he is in love."

"With himself?" asked Jaffray, swallowing his soup and cutting a fresh slice of bread.

"Firstly with himself, of course," said Marie, "like all lovers; and secondly with——"

"Whom?" asked Jaffray.

"A lady."

"Of course," said Jaffray.

"And perhaps you know Count de Fournier?"

"Most likely," said Jaffray; "many people know him."

"But you were in America."

"I only knew that he had been there on the day of the Bastille," Jaffray replied, pausing to look up at his hostess, "and on that day he was a revelation to me. Ah, mademoiselle, he is as brave as he is good; I would say that if it cost me my head."

"Hush! not so loud, my friend; I, too, wear the national colours, but I have a heart all the same. The count has been kind to you?"

"It is not treason to say so; I can see that in your kind face."

"My hand on it," said Marie, offering the pretty

guarantee of her sincerity, which Jaffray, having wiped his lips, kissed with boyish reverence.

"Go on with your supper; it is good to talk while one eats," said Marie.

"I was only a child, little more, about eight; but I can see Cherry Valley at this moment as if it was yesterday. I was born in England, near Dover, but my father and mother emigrated to America and carried me there when I was an infant. Often have I heard my mother tell of the hardships of the journey by sea. They settled in Cherry Valley. We knew the American troops had been defeated not far away, and there was talk of massacres by Tories and Indians; but Cherry Valley had a strong fort, and Colonel Alden, who was in command, was confident of our safety. Unfortunately, he knew nothing of Indian warfare. The villagers remained in their houses until they were aroused by a savage war cry outside the stockade and fort. Colonel Alden, it turned out, had been reconnoitring in a free and easy way, and was suddenly surprised by an Indian scout. He fired his pistol, and ran for his life: but he was killed before his men inside could repel an assault, and the next moment, as it seemed, the village was full of Indians under their wily chief, Joseph Brant. Fifty people were massacred, many of them women and children. My father and mother were among those who fell. The soldiers in the fort barely held their own against a troop of the British; but a young French officer did wonders in the way of combat with the Indians. He snatched me from death, and bore me to the fort, where a few others of the villagers found shelter. The fort was not captured. It stood a siege of several hours, and finally beat off the enemy. Help came, I think: for the French officer, with part of the garrison, went out in pursuit of the Indians; and I never saw my deliverer again until that day of the Bastille when I was lending a hand to the patriots of Paris; I flung myself among his assailants, and, drawing their attention from him for a moment, assisted his escape. It had been ordained that gratitude should have a show just then as well as hatred and murder."

"It was Count de Fournier!" exclaimed Marie. "God bless you!" adding after a pause, "yet you are in the service of his bitterest enemy."

"You mean the Deputy Grébauval?"

"Yes, the friend of Citizen Robespierre."

"If I wear the national colours," Jaffray replied, "I, too, have a heart."

"You are cautious, but you may trust me. I also know the count and the beautiful lady to whom he is this day to be betrothed. Hush! speak lower."

"You said there was no chance of our being disturbed."

"Nor is there; but there are some things one only whispers in these days. I work for Mademoiselle de Louvet; she was a friend to me long before the day of the Bastille; the duchess, her mother, receives the Deputy Grébauval; General Lafayette also; the duke is a royalist, the duchess has other views; it is likely to be a sad story. Have you seen the count to-day?"

"Yes," said Jaffray, pushing aside his empty cup.

"You were his messenger?"

"How, mademoiselle?"

"He sent you to the Château?"

"How do you know?"

"I don't know; I only guess."

"I am in the service of the Citizen Grébauval," said Jaffray. "If my heart goes out to the *ci-devant* count, as they call him, it is for the reason I have told you. He snatched me from the Indian hatchet. It was by accident that I was in the midst of the fighting to-day. Oh, the horrors of it! I seemed to be back again in Cherry Valley!"

Marie went to the window and drew the curtain aside the breadth of her finger. Then she crossed the room to the door and listened.

"What is it?" asked Jaffray.

"Nothing; you have made me nervous."

"What do you suspect?"

"Nothing," she said. "I was wondering where you will go when you leave here. Do you expect to reach Neuilly?"

"Neuilly?" repeated Jaffray.

"There is a short cut past the Lion d'Or, across through a stretch of wood and some meadows."

"Where to, mademoiselle?"

"The Château de Louvet. Do you know Pierre, at the Lion d'Or? He is a patriot, and his wife is a virago. Pierre lived in the de Louvet family before the insurrection. He is a good fellow, Pierre, you may trust him; he will tell you what has been done at the Château. Do you think Count de Fournier made his way safely there?"

Marie, with all her self-repression, could not disguise a certain anxiety in regard to the safety of Count de Fournier. She might have known that Jaffray had been entrusted with an important message to Mademoiselle Mathilde; but she only guessed it, not so much from what had fallen from the unwilling lips of Jaffray, as from a remark that had been made to her early in the morning by one who was in the confidence of Grébauval and was a trusted agent of Robespierre.

"Was Count de Fournier going to the Château de Louvet?" asked Jaffray in response to Marie's question.

"Don't you know he was to be there to-day?" she said, rising to her feet and standing close by Jaffray's side.

Jaffray only shrugged his shoulders and filled himself another cup of wine.

"I know it, monsieur, I know it, and others know it. Nothing could have been more imprudent than to give a fête to-day, and fly the king's standard. It was madness. Citizen Grébauval is not the man to be defied. He is stronger to-day than twenty Counts de Fournier. You have seen what has happened within the past few hours—God knows what, I don't; I could only surmise, only sit in fear and wonder; I have not dared to go out to-day, not dared; I have been little better than a prisoner——"

"A prisoner!" said Jaffray.

"No, no; not that, but under surveillance. Every man and woman in the Rue Barnabé is a spy. Is it

not so everywhere, monsieur? And they know that I have business at the Château de Louvet. My—I mean, a neighbour said last night that within a month every royalist head remaining in Paris would fall. Marat in his paper demands thousands of heads as if he were a vampire. My neighbour was gay and jubilant this morning and wore a long knife in his sash, a most unusual thing. There have been strange cries in the air, and the tocsin has been drowned by the firing of guns. The *cordonnier* round the corner passed under my window this afternoon with a red pike and his sleeves turned up!"

"Calm yourself, mademoiselle; it is all very terrible, but I thought you were a stoic."

"I thought so, too; but I am only a poor creature, after all. It is not for myself that I fear."

"Is it for me that you are anxious? You make me feel proud; but I am no royalist; and if I am a fugitive from a patriot mob it is only through an error, a mistake—witness my tricolour, tender me the oath. Vive la Nation!"

Jaffray was speaking now not alone for Marie Bruyset (was she really as friendly as she seemed?), but for others who might be within earshot. Jaffray, no longer hungry, was Jaffray no longer emotional; he was Jaffray the diplomat, Jaffray with a mission. Fear, the tocsin, death, danger, tribulation in every shape had for a time held him in bondage. A still more mission-obliterating influence had fallen upon him under the hospitable roof of Marie Bruyset. Rest, safety (at least for the time), dainty fare, good wine, and sweet companionship had eclipsed the memory of the hunted figure of his illustrious friend whose sweetheart was to have had tidings of him from Jaffray; for an hour or more he had been wasting time under the smell of a bottle of wine and a pretty girl.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FOOTSTEP ON THE STAIR.

His supper finished, Jaffray prepared to take his leave.

"Where do you live?" asked Marie.

"One can hardly be said to live anywhere in these times."

"I hope we may meet again," she said.

"Thank you, my dear friend; reckon me among the dead if we do not, and that very soon," said Jaffray, tightening his belt and giving free play to a knife in an old leathern sheath.

"Hush, what time is that striking?"

They listened, and counted eleven by the clock of St. Roch.

"So late?" she said; "how quickly the time has gone! Adieu, monsieur; if I do not soon put out my lamp, my father, seeing a light, may call to say good-night; and I would not have him see you for worlds."

"When we meet again I will tell you all you ask about myself, and invite from you a similar confidence. I don't believe we should ever betray each other, even on the rack."

"Don't be so sure of that," she replied, unlocking the door and offering her hand to Jaffray with the dignity of a queen and the grace of a French demoiselle.

"Au revoir," said Jaffray, pressing her pretty fingers to his lips.

"A plague upon it," she exclaimed, snatching her hand away. "S-s-s-h! your passage is barred;" and as she said so she shut the door and turned the key.

"Who is it?" he asked in a whisper, half doubtful of his protectress—for there was something strange in the remark, "Don't be so sure of that."

"An enemy, perhaps," she said. "He has seen the light, he is coming up."

"Then I did hear a footstep on the stair," he replied, his hand on his knife.

"Perhaps," she answered. "You will need no knife; come this way."

She led him across the room to a corner near her couch, and drew aside a heavy portière.

"This is my secret," she said, as she drew a sliding door. "Enter."

Jaffray hesitated. A footstep was heard on the stairway.

"Trust me," she said. "My visitor is——but no matter, you will be safe here until he has gone."

Jaffray stepped within the closet, but as Marie drew the sliding door he slipped the sheath of his knife between it and the panel. When Marie pulled the portière across it he quietly slid the door back and stood within the curtain, where he could retire or step forward as occasion might seem desirable.

He heard a knock at the door. Marie opened at once.

"I thought you were abed," said a harsh grating voice.

"I was just going," said Marie. "What do you want?"

"A word with you," was the answer.

"Come in the morning," said Marie; "I am tired."

"No, you are not," said the harsh voice. "You are afraid."

"Indeed!"

"If you do not fear, I fear for you. To be suspected is to be lost. You are suspected."

"Who is my accuser?"

"Simon the printer."

"*Canaille!*" said Marie. "He wrote me a love-letter, though he can't spell my name. I flung it in his face; so I am suspected!"

"He saw a fugitive from justice climb your balcony; the man has not left your room."

"Oh, really! And Monsieur Simon says that, does he? I will speak to Citizen Simon to-morrow."

Jaffray tightened his belt and held his breath.

"Indeed! and why did not Citizen Simon follow the aristocrat and capture him?"

"He desired to spare you."

"Really, he is too good."

"He was sitting by his window, when the patriots passed the Rue Barnabé, and the traitor slunk along the street and made for your balcony, where a light was burning. A signal, no doubt?"

"No doubt," said Marie, scornfully.

"Friend Simon, out of respect for me and regard for you, raised no alarm; but he watched."

"Yes, trust him for that," said Marie.

"And when I returned to my home after the duties of the day he lay in wait to tell me, that I might do what I thought best in the interest of my country, and with the least exposure of the dear little demoiselle Marie, as he called you."

"The dear little demoiselle Marie despises him, and will have the honour of telling him so—swine that he is!" was the angry rejoinder.

"You wrong him," said the harsh voice, "and you do not understand the service he has rendered you. Listen, Marie. The people have won a great victory. Tyranny brought its Swiss guards against them and all its artillery. King and guards are overthrown. Liberty is enthroned at the Tuileries. Among the fugitives, flying before the just vengeance of the people, was one Fournier, a count so-called, one of the king's entourage. You change colour, Marie. I know why you have had so many commissions from the woman Mathilde Louvet."

"Mademoiselle de Louvet she is called," said Marie, defiantly, "daughter of le Duc et la Duchesse de Louvet."

"At the moment of this Fournier's capture," went on Laroche, "a stripling in the secret employ of the Deputy Grébauval rushed from among the lookers-on to his rescue."

"Brave stripling," said Marie.

"The sudden diversion, and a shout of 'The Swiss!' raised by an idiot who mistook a *bonnet rouge* for the

red of the mercenaries, favoured the escape of the traitors; but one of them has been traced; his name is Jaffray Ellicott."

"All honour to him," said Marie, "wherever he is."

"It is well for you, Marie, that only I hear you say these things. But my patience is exhausted. This Ellicott naturally made for the Pont-Neuf and the bureau of the Deputy Grébauval, near the Palais de Justice, but was overtaken and eluded his pursuers in the Rue Barnabé."

Jaffray held himself motionless; but, strengthened by Marie's wine and soup and encouraged by her brave words, resolved not to be taken alive.

"Yesterday, while you were on your weekly mission to the Château, I discovered your secret closet," continued the harsh voice, with something of a chuckle.

"Then you entered my room in my absence and spied upon me?"

"It is my business to spy."

"On your daughter?" said Marie, "the daughter of the mother whose life you made a curse and a burden, you——"

"I've heard enough of that," said the harsh voice, "and I place duty above daughter, wife, or self."

"Her father!" said Jaffray to himself, and sheathed the knife he had drawn.

"You have listened at my door?"

"I have; and I suspect that the traitor Ellicott is not the first enemy of the people who has found shelter under your roof."

"You and Citizen Simon are in league to destroy me!" exclaimed Marie, bitterly. "Very well; do your worst. I despise you both."

"Don't couple me with Simon," said the harsh voice. "I would die for you in the cause of honour—lose honour to save you; but I must have this youth Ellicott."

Jaffray, conscious of the man's approach, compressed his lips and stiffened his sinews.

Thereupon there was a brief scuffle, Marie barring her father's way; he evidently resolute.

"THE NEXT MOMENT JAFFRAY, WITH A WELL-PLANTED BLOW, SENT HIM SPRAWLING ON HIS BACK."

"I have been too blind to your doings, Marie. Let me pass, or, by my soul, I'll walk over you."

Then a powerful hand tore at the curtain, and dragged it, pole and all, to the ground. The next moment, Jaffray, with a well-planted blow, sent the investigator sprawling on his back, and, dashing for the door, could be heard by every tenant of the echoing building making his way to the street.

CHAPTER V.

SIMON THE PRINTER FIRES HIS GUN.

"BRAVO!" exclaimed Marie, as Jaffray rushed past her, but her heart stood still almost the next moment; for, simultaneously with the banging of the outer door, a gun-shot was heard, followed by a sudden cry and the shouts of pursuers.

Laroche picked himself slowly up from the floor. Marie ran to the window, and by the light of a lantern hung from an opposite doorway observed Simon the printer with a firelock which he had evidently just discharged.

"But he has escaped," she said. "Yes, I'm sure of it; the saints would never permit that he should fall by such vile hands as those."

"You will fall, and by viler paws, you traitress!" exclaimed Laroche, wiping his bruised face.

"That would be impossible," said Marie.

"You have learnt the lesson of the aristocrats. It only needed that you should become a wanton to make your perfidy complete."

"How dare you say that!" Marie replied, pale to the lips. "How dare you!"

"Because I am your father and have surprised you with your lover, who is a spy and an agent of the enemies of France—I can't say of his country; he is a

foreigner—but Paris will free herself of all such parasites."

"Paris is mad," said Marie, "and I have lived long enough since my father takes me for one of the creatures who make their shame their glory. Order my arrest; it is not far to the Conciergerie; at least I shall find some honourable companionship among your prisoners."

Laroche contemplated the only human being whom he had ever loved with a passion of anger and affection, wounded pride, and enforced admiration. The sting of Jaffray's blow, and a pang of remorse at the same time for the epithet he had used against Marie, whose young life of virtue and courage was a perpetual reproach to him and at the same time a secret delight, struggled in his rough, hard nature for mastery. Parental instinct conquered.

"I'm sorry for what I said, Marie," came from his unwilling lips; "it isn't true. You are the only one pure soul I ever knew; on that count I ask your pardon."

"I forgive you," said Marie, her eyes full of tears.

"Oh, why will you go against me and France?" he said, opening his arms to her and mingling his tears with her own—this hard, bitter old agent of the police. "I didn't mean it, my girl; it's the cruellest lie I ever uttered; I'd tear the heart out of any man who said it; and yet I have done you that wrong, and I am your father."

"Let it pass, dear; let it pass. He was a fugitive from death. I sheltered him for that, not because he was royalist or patriot, citizen or stranger; but he is no spy, believe me. Citizen Fournier saved his life, when he was a child, in America, during the revolution there, when Indians massacred women and children—not Frenchmen, but Indians, Why shall we French become Indians? It was an act of gratitude on his part. This fugitive, to try and save his deliverer——"

"But this Fournier is the enemy of the people. You know it, you know it. To be allied with him and his friends is treason; you know it, Marie, and you risk

my life too when you risk your own, and my life is my country's; it may take it, but not for treason—not for treason! Understand that once for all. Marie, my child, my only consolation in life, think of this; I warn you for the last time. If France should one day call upon me, from the throne of her justice, to sacrifice you! Think of it. I must do it. Don't ask me to do it, dear, don't ask for the last drop of blood in my withered heart—the last drop that speaks to you now."

Marie was deeply moved by this appeal. She knew how hard and bitter her father could be, what a martinet he was to duty; how the influences of Robespierre and Grébauval held him bound, and with what an exaggerated view he regarded every Frenchman of good family and every friend of the king and queen; and she almost pitied him.

"Father," she said, "you cannot change your heart; it makes you love me in spite of your political watchwords, your new colours, and your new hatreds. How can I help pitying Mademoiselle de Louvet, who has been so good to me? How can I help sympathising with her lover, and hating the rival who would drag a pure sweet girl from a refined and noble home to reign among sansculottes and be company for the mistresses of Marat and St. Just, and——"

"Peace, child; I must not listen to you. Be advised. You say I love you; I do; give me a little in return. Events are marching quickly. Throats have bled to-day for and against France. Patriotism is master. The nation rules peacefully. It will be a rule of discipline and justice. From this moment to be suspected is to be arrested; to be arrested is to be condemned. You had until an hour ago one enemy—only one; he is now in my service, Simon the printer. Don't answer me. Make no other enemy. Be warned. Good-night!"

During the last few sentences Laroche had passed from the father to the officer of the secret police. His manner had become formal, his words fell heavily, his sentences were short and crisp; there was something of a canine snap in their periods.

"One word," said Marie. "This young man?"

At this moment there was a low whistle on the stairway.

"He is taken," said Laroche; "that is the signal."

"My God!" exclaimed Marie. "And the de Louvets?"

"The Deputy Grébauval went with a company of the National Guard to Neuilly this afternoon."

"You have warned me," said Marie, facing her father, her eyes fixed upon his, her manner calm as any heroine of the Place Henri IV. "I warn you. The safety of the de Louvets and of this fugitive, Jaffray Ellicott, are the terms of my peace with you. Such as their fortunes may be, so shall mine. I look to you in this, and to you only. And so, good-night!"

Laroche made no reply. He turned as if he would; but the next moment he was gone, and Marie stood listening to his firm, steady tread, and heard the door close upon him as he left the great rambling house of many tenants.

Now Marie Bruyset was a spy. Jaffray Ellicott was little better. They were both living among the people against whom they plotted, not for scrip or fee, not in their own interest, not of malice prepense, but out of very love and pity. Spies all the same. Nearly everybody was a spy in Paris at that time. Neighbour spied on neighbour, friend on friend, relative on relative, each for his own sake, some from spite and vengeance and a thirst for blood, others to save their own necks, many for no reason in particular, but all actuated by the satanic spirit of the times, whirled hither and thither in the dance of death that went on day and night to the sound of drum and trumpet, the clashing of bells, and the chant of the Carmagnole.

Sitting aloft in her garret with her miniatures and her prints, her little stove and her clean carpet, Marie Bruyset could hear the music all the time. It was like living on the skirts of a fair, with its eternal shows and shooting galleries, its tintinnabulary invitations to unnatural wonders, and its hurly-burly of human shouts and showmen's cries. It swirled up and down the outer frontiers of the Rue Barnabé, but had never found its

way into the precincts of the old courtyard with its tubs of laurels, its ladders, its drying clothes, and its romping children; for children romped and played, and men and women made love and were given in marriage, and there were quiet families that partook of their quiet dinners and spent musical evenings all through the Terror and its storm of blood.

The father of Jaffray Ellicott's little hostess was Eugène Laroche, one of the most uncompromising agents of police in the employment of the Revolutionary Tribunal. When Marie was a girl of fifteen her mother died of a broken heart, caused by the dissipation, infidelity, and general ill-usage of her husband. On her death he swore a vow of reform which he had kept ever since, and by way of making some amends to the ghost of the dead mother, he had been a kind and considerate father to Marie. When she was twenty he married again, a decent woman, who was content to be a drudge and give him the place of lord and master. Then Marie resolved to be her own mistress and live her own life. She had been educated at a convent hard by, had shown some skill as a miniature painter, was content to paint from life or make copies from original works, and she had formed quite a clientèle among the many good families in Paris when the Revolution broke out. Her sympathies were naturally supposed to be with the people and her father, but she still, as far as possible, kept her connection together. Exile and the guillotine reduced their numbers, and as they fell away Marie's heart went after them to the guillotine and beyond the sea; but it was only recently that she had been induced to play the spy against her father and his bloodthirsty masters.

When Marie set up housekeeping on her own account she adopted her mother's maiden name, and of late had found it of great advantage not to be known as Mademoiselle Laroche, a name which had become terrible even among "the people" so called. Laroche was a sleuth-hound. Once on the scent, no fugitive escaped him. He was under the impression that he obtained useful information from his daughter, more particularly

in regard to the family of de Louvet and a certain Henri Comte de Fournier, but Marie's heart was engaged in their interest, and it was Laroche who was useful to Marie and her friends. Laroche lived in the same building as that which sheltered Marie, and he frequently paid her fatherly as well as official visits, though they were all supposed to count under the first category. It is as well to say at once that Laroche had a weak streak in his character; it was a leaning towards Marie—a leaning and a fervent admiration. He would listen to her with patience, even when she appealed for some poor creature whom she knew to be in his power. He even tolerated the portrait of the queen in her room; and encouraged her to talk of her patroness Mademoiselle de Louvet, though he barred the "de" in his mention of her, as he barred the "duc" when he spoke of Louvet and the "count" when he mentioned de Fournier, the active and bitter enemy of the Deputy Grébauval.

Jaffray Ellicott was playing a double game, with cards no less powerful than Marie's, and with a more subtle purpose. If he had known that he was talking to the police agent's daughter, he might not have talked so freely about himself; but Marie had a way of winning confidence, and by hints that she let fall he was shrewd enough to gather that while she displayed among her miniatures famous revolutionary chiefs and their mistresses, there was something more than mere bravado in her exhibition of the portrait of the unpopular Marie Antoinette.

CHAPTER VI.

RIVALS IN LOVE AND WAR.

NEITHER good news nor bad travelled very quickly in the first days of the French Revolution; though there was in the air an instinct of dire events.

The taking of the Bastille was a mere local incident to thousands of Parisians, and the fall of the Tuileries

was accomplished without its fierce din and stir being felt beyond the faubourgs.

Count de Fournier, however, early in the morning of the eventful day, finding that he might be seriously engaged in Paris when he should be taking part in the ceremony of betrothal at the Château de Louvet, dispatched Jaffray Ellicott to acquaint the persons most concerned beyond himself with the possibility of his presence being delayed by events which he could not control.

We have seen how it fared with the count's ambassador. It is now the business of the historian to follow the adventures of the count himself. To this purpose it will be necessary to make the reader acquainted with other leading characters in this drama of love and war.

The ceremony of the betrothal of Mathilde de Louvet (the gracious friend of Marie Bruyset) to Henri Comte de Fournier had been fixed for the very day upon which the mawkish weakness of Louis the king had signed the death-warrant of his brave Swiss Guard and the fall of his dynasty. You may see the slip of paper to this day in a black frame at the Carnavalet Museum in the handwriting of the unfortunate monarch, a simple thing to have caused so much mischief. Neither Swiss Guards nor the courtiers in attendance on the royal family ever dreamed that they would not be free at least to defend themselves, whatever concessions the king might be induced to make to his opponents.

Count de Fournier was an officer of hussars and was making arrangements to join Lafayette on the frontier, whither he had hoped to induce his prospective relatives, by marriage, to accompany him, with a view to their leaving France until her political troubles should be sufficiently settled for the safety of such members of the aristocracy as desired to live at home in peace and on good terms with their neighbours. But the Duke de Louvet was a stern and proud old royalist, strong in his title to the respect of France, with a record of brave deeds and an honest belief in the fidelity of the nation to the men who had been true to her in all weathers; and he would not budge.

It was the duke's stiff neckedness-that had forced an old custom of the family into public observance, when it might have taken place privately with much propriety at a time when anything like social display was an invitation to democratic criticism and revolt. For the people had suffered grievously at the hands of their inconsiderate rulers. Even in the village life of France the despotic heel of a grinding tyranny had been felt by all classes below the salt. It is true the de Louvets from time immemorial had been kindly and free-handed to their neighbours, rich and poor. Nevertheless, their prosperity had been out of proportion to that of the commoner folk of Neuilly and Courbevoie, which latter place, by the way, was the chief quarters of the Swiss Guard, who had barracks there, and represented to the district and to Paris a section of that foreign element of repression against which the democratic spirit chafed fretfully.

All this made a fête at the Château de Louvet a most unwise proceeding.

Count de Fournier and the Deputy Grébauval were strangely alike in person, and they loved the same woman, Mademoiselle Mathilde, the only daughter of the Duke and Duchess de Louvet. This sentiment, however, was the only human link between them, if we except pride and a certain mingling of blood that did not make for peace.

Nevertheless they both claimed to be patriots. Each, in his own way, was ambitious for the glory of his country. There entered, however, into the political faith of the Deputy Grébauval selfish influences that were foreign to the nature of his rival.

It was not generally known that the two men were brothers. Madame Grébauval was not the mother of Count de Fournier, though the late count was the father of both. The bar sinister on Grébauval's escutcheon had not held him back in his fight for fame and fortune. A masterful and aspiring youth, he had been successful at college, and, later, in the profession of the law. Intellectually he was not inferior to his friend and patron, Robespierre.

As fate would have it, whenever de Fournier and Grébauval had met in the course of their young and eventful lives, they invariably left behind them the trail of a mutual animosity. It must have been ordained from the first that these two men should be enemies. If the devil is permitted a hand in human affairs he may have presided over the creation of such men as Grébauval, Robespierre, Marat, Danton, and the like; his Master providing the opposites in order that the balance of things might be maintained.

For every dragon there is a St. George; but many a victim succumbs before the champion is permitted to rescue the last one and slay the ogre. It was no doubt hard upon Grébauval that he should suffer the smart of a shame he had no hand in. Nor was there anything personally meritorious in the fact that de Fournier had come into the world with the sanction of the Church. If these arrangements are outside our influence, it is not absolutely necessary that we should make the disability a lifelong pang. Nevertheless, the constant friction of a tortured pride had burnt into Grébauval's soul the memory of his mother's wrongs and his own. To him there was only one sinner in the compact which gave him birth, and that was Count de Fournier's father; and it maddened him to feel that the son rejoiced in all the social qualifications that would necessarily influence the Duke and Duchess de Louvet in their choice of a son-in-law.

Disciples of Lavater would have expected to find in the physical similarities of Grébauval and de Fournier reflected moral qualities. No two men could have been more unlike each other in this respect. Nor would a shrewd observer have failed to detect the difference in the expressions of the two faces. De Fournier could mimic Grébauval, and did so often, and at one period of their two eventful histories much to his own advantage; but they were unlike in manner as they were in mind. The one was courtier-like, scrupulously dressed, gay in hat and feather, quick in repartee, frank of speech, open-handed, fearless in quarrel, and generous to both friend and foe. The other was satur-

nine, crafty, an intriguer, a treacherous friend and a cruel enemy; and under an affected passion for the welfare of his country nursed an overweening and selfish ambition. The two men were alike, however, in a spirit of personal pride.

If Grébauval chafed against the social distinction of de Fournier, he was proud of his own skill in rising above his station, and plumed himself upon a political power that was daily increasing. If he had a redeeming quality—and no man is without some suggestion of his divine origin—it was his love for Mathilde. It was a genuine passion. Whatever his laches might have been, his love for Mathilde was as sincere as that of the brave and gallant de Fournier.

De Fournier and Grébauval had both been in America at the same time, though in different places and on opposite missions. The count had served on the staff of Lafayette, young and ardent like himself, but, as it turned out, more faithfully attached to monarchial institutions, for de Fournier had resigned his place after his first important victory, dissatisfied with Lafayette's democratic aspirations for France, and urged to return by the Duke de Louvet, who advised him that the place for every true Frenchman was by the side of the king, who would soon have plenty of enemies to fight near home without going across the Atlantic to find them. The death of the young count's father had provided him with further and more public reasons for returning home, and Mathilde was an attraction that he might not reckon so long as duty seemed to keep him from her.

Citizen Grébauval had followed Lafayette to the New World in his civic capacity, and with a view to studying liberty at its fountain-head; and he had returned to Paris at a time that was ripe for mischief, both as to the interests of Paris and the Château de Louvet. After sundry adventures, Mathilde's civilian admirer had returned with the general when that gallant soldier brought home the sword with which it was claimed he had conquered England in America to the service of freedom in France. It was his misconcep-

tion of the difference between the conditions under which the young Republic had sought emancipation from kingly control and those of the ancient monarchy of France that gave a fatally pernicious direction to his influence in the French Revolution. But this is another story, and we are engaged with the history of Paris when the Bastille had newly fallen before the trumpet blasts of liberty and (in the estimation of the author) the pamphlets of the Citizen Grébauval, who was no less vain of his pen than Lafayette of his sword. He had deified the literature of America in his "Apotheosis of Freedom," and had translated into French for private circulation several Boston tracts on the liberty of nations, the rights of man, and other subjects that agitated the minds of men in his own country, still suffering from the influence of a despotism as cruel as it was luxurious.

The duchess, both from interest and inclination, favoured Grébauval's suit for her daughter's hand. She traded upon the deputy's friendship in the matter of certain privileges that would have been otherwise denied by the Government to the de Louvet family. Moreover, she had induced Mathilde to permit Grébauval to give his matrimonial proposal serious consideration. The duchess hoped that at least she would keep him on their visiting list. But neither Grébauval nor Mathilde could endure to have the question of her decision postponed. In addressing Mathilde, Grébauval had begged her not to give him a definite answer, to wait that she might test the honesty of his passion, which he assured her was an all-consuming love for her; but she felt in her heart that she had already wronged the man she loved by listening to the serious proposals of another. Grébauval had in his avowals suggested modifications of principle and action that he might be inclined to make as a leader of the democracy; but Mathilde had assured him that while she would die for her people and her class, if necessary, she did not share the orthodox royalist heresy, that worth must have blood and rank to entitle it to respect and confidence. She did not quarrel with the aspirations of the people

for better government, for better food, and more comfortable homes, but she would be true to her name and her birth, and faithful to her first and only love.

It had been unfortunate that, as these last passages of love and controversy were passing between Mathilde and Grébauval, the young Count de Fournier, all silks and gold and lace and feathers, a picture-gallant, so to speak, haughty and yet gay of demeanour, full of animal spirits and soldier-like daring, had arrived at the Château with messages from the troubled Court and news of a safe retreat in the event of the danger to peace and order which was even then daily predicted and hourly expected, though the cloud which threatened shifted from day to day and had not, on this day of Mathilde's refusal of the hand of Grébauval, broken out into active sanguinary revolt.

Grébauval was leaving the Château. He and the young count met. From the moment the two observed each other there was an instinctive reaching out for swords. It only needed the exchange of a few words for them to draw. The incident was quickly over. The count was the aggressor with both tongue and sword. Though from the outset he saw what would happen, Grébauval was reluctant to draw; not that he was a coward, but he had more thought for the de Louvets than even their more devoted friend. Henri, the young Count de Fournier, was impulsive, reckless, fearless, thoughtless. His love for Mathilde, which was his excuse for insulting and attacking Grébauval, had nothing whatever to do with the situation. A passionate man thinks of nobody but his own passion, if even he thinks of that. He is not his own master, his wits are impaled on the shafts of his rage; he knows nothing, sees nobody but the supposed enemy, the antagonist, in front of him. On this occasion the young soldier was the victim of his temper. The less practised swordsman found a skill in his coolness that the other had won on the field of honour by the practice of necessity and military usage. In half-a-dozen passes Grébauval disarmed his enemy, and was returning him his sword as the duke and duchess rushed upon the scene.

"Learn patience, Sir Count," said Grébauval, "and don't forget that in these days fencing is not an art alone understood among gentlemen, so-called."

With mortification and rage the count took back his sword, and in response to the demand of the duke, "What has happened? Explain, explain," Grébauval merely remarked: "Nothing, monsieur le duc; the count was only showing me his weapon; the hilt is undoubtedly beautiful—*au revoir*," bowed with the grace of a gallant to the duchess, and went on his way to the council that was before sunset to decide one of the most momentous questions of the first days of the Revolution.

This unhappy incident had occurred long before the fall of the Bastille, but the Duchess de Louvet had not ceased to use her influence in favour of Grébauval. She made a point of visiting a certain salon, where he and both Robespierre and St. Just were guests. It was hoped even at one time that she might have been the medium of an accommodation with the king. That time, however, had passed, and she had begun to find herself between the fire of two parties, with the additional disadvantage of satisfying neither.

Such was the relationship of de Fournier and Grébauval, and of both towards Mathilde and the de Louvets, on the day when Mathilde was to be publicly betrothed to Grébauval's successful rival, and on which memorable day Jaffray Ellicott had found refuge in the garret of Marie Bruyset in the Rue Barnabé.

CHAPTER VII.

VIVE LA NATION!

THE Lion d'Or was a wayside cabaret on the outskirts of Paris, between the barriers and Neuilly. It furnished good accommodation for both man and beast. Of late it had sheltered as many men who were en-

titled to the latter appellation as it had stabled examples of the more exemplary quadruped. The fall of the Bastille and the march of subsequent events of a violent character had begun to exercise a violent influence all over the country. Such creatures as no one had ever heard of before but of a sensational novel of the night side of Paris appeared in the streets, men of ferocious aspect, and unsexed women no less forbidding.

While anxious guests were waiting for Count de Fournier at the Château de Louvet, the Lion d'Or, half a league away, was occupied by a no less picturesque assemblage of guests. Whenever one thinks of this period of European history, the dress of the time occupies the imaginative eye and helps to raise the horrors of it above the sordid and sanguinary stage upon which they were enacted. The revolutionary sash, the *bonnet rouge*, the cocked hat, the tricolour cockade, the knee breeches, the long coats, the ample vests and cravats of the men; the mob cap, short skirts and sabots of the women, varied by the brocades, coloured cloths, white cross-overs, tall hats and short, of those a grade or two higher than their sisters of the toiling classes, these, not to mention the characteristic attire of men belonging to such eccentrics as the Merveilleuses and Incroyables, and the uniforms of the military and civic arms, give the actors on life's real theatre, as one looks back upon the exciting scenes, a colour and distinction that are valuable accessories to romance.

The company at the Lion d'Or were a very mixed assemblage. They had abandoned the seats and tables outside the porchway, under the influence of a sharp shower of rain that brought down into the roadway a few of the first fallen leaves of an early autumn. The room in which they were smoking and drinking had a pleasant low window with an ample inside seat, with a bar-counter at the other end which gave upon a small parlour, the sanctuary of the hostess, who was known as Madame Angélique, in cynical recognition of qualities that made her on occasion a terror alike to her customers and her husband, Pierre Grappin.

Among the guests in the common room of the Lion

d'Or on the day of the de Louvet fête were the usual village loafers, who lived on odd jobs round about Neuilly and Courbevoie, and spent their leisure in listening to the news from Paris and bragging of their untested prowess as prospective volunteers for the army that was engaged in doing battle for France with the foreign invader. It was already late in the afternoon, and yet no news of the morning's tragedy of the Tuileries had reached the Lion d'Or.

"They say all women are alike in the dark," remarked a scoffing Parisian, with a cravat that somewhat impeded his affected elocution, "not even excluding our friend Madame Angélique," at which there was a burst of suppressed laughter, the speaker himself having lowered his voice as he named the hostess, "and the same may apply to some men; but even by candlelight mademoiselle the Citoyenne Louvet might easily mistake the Deputy Grébauval for the *ci-devant* Count de Fournier."

"Yes," said another gossip lolling by the open window, "a confounded curious thing that! Who knows? The old count was a gay dog in his time, like all the crew of the base aristocrats. If the Deputy Grébauval has not the refinement of the so-called count he has the same short, scornful lip, the same swarthy complexion, the same masterful disposition."

"Well, we shall see," remarked the Parisian. "It might have been more discreet to have dismissed Deputy Grébauval graciously when the people are on the way to become the only power in France."

"Certainly, citizen, you are right," said another gossip; "and had I been the adviser of the aristocrats of the Château de Louvet, I would not have been making fêtes, lighting lanterns, and waxing salon floors for satin shoes and diamond buckles just at this particular moment."

"More especially," added the thoughtful citizen, blowing a cloud of smoke among the rafters, "with Citizen Deputy Grébauval mounting up to the head of affairs."

"They say," remarked the first speaker, "that the

duchess was inclined to favour the deputy's suit, and that the heiress herself was vastly civil to him, but that Citizen Henri, otherwise the count, insulted him, and that they fought."

"No!" exclaimed another. "Fought, did you say?"

"I said fought—that was my very word; and, moreover, the deputy disarmed the fiery young viper."

"Vive la Nation!" shouted Jacques Renaud, rushing in from the roadway in the midst of the conversation.

"By all means," was the reply; "but manners, Master Blunderbuss; you have interrupted a conversation."

"Many another will be interrupted before many hours are over," said Jacques, flinging his greasy hat upon a seat and rubbing his dirty hands through his matted hair.

"Are you off to Paris, then?" asked a quiet man from a corner of the sanded room.

"Vive le Peuple!" was the reply of the gobe-mouche.

"A mort tous les aristocrates!"

It was a rasping voice, in which Jacques Renaud called down anathemas upon the aristocracy in general; and the blouse he wore was dark with stains of drink and mud. He was a cowardly ragamuffin, and he looked it, from his narrow forehead and little peeky eyes to his great sprawling half-shod feet.

"Less noise, if you please," said Pierre, the landlord, putting his round well-shaped head into the room; "one would think the Revolution had taken a fresh start."

"And so it has," said a new-comer who had followed him and was standing by his side as he spoke, "and so it has, my brothers. A bottle of wine, good Pierre, to drink to our noble selves, the Sovereign People!"

Pierre bustled out to his wife in the little bar and brought two bottles of wine,—"One for you, Citizen Neroc, and one at my own charge to drink to our better fortune!"

Citizen Neroc was a person of local note and a red-hot revolutionary. He wore a red sash about his ample waist and a cockade in his tall hat; and, moreover, carried a pair of pistols in his waistband. Madame

Angélique came forth from her parlour to greet him. She was low-browed, with a wide, thin-lipped mouth, broad-shouldered but flat-bosomed, wore a loose gown open so that it exhibited her sinewy neck. She had bright flashing eyes, and, by way of contrast, a slow, deliberate manner of speaking. And she was more or less biblical in her similes.

"Well, Citizen Neroc, are we smiting them hip and thigh?" she said, putting out a hard broad hand which he raised to his lips with an air of serious gallantry. "Are we taking our vengeance upon the enemies of the Lord and his people?"

"We are marching on," said Neroc, "the news whereof will reach you all in good time. Vive la France!"

Pierre had filled every glass. "To France!" shouted a dozen voices; "And down with the aristocrats!" said Renaud, to which madame, raising her hand for silence, appended, "And let us begin at the enemy within our gates—Down with the Louvets!"

"Stop!" cried Pierre. "Stop, I say, or, by God, I will stab the man who doesn't!" and he drew from a sheath hanging upon his hip a formidable knife. "Drink what it please you against the enemies of France; but the Louvets are none, and they are my friends, and this is my house."

Pierre's manifesto created general consternation.

"Your house?" said madame, facing him.

"My house!" said Pierre, "and I will keep its honour clean—if such canaille as Citizen Renaud does not make that quite impossible."

It was only once in a way that Pierre contested the supremacy of his wife, but when he did so his usually calm nature burst all bounds; a very Vesuvius, it overcame all obstacles. Madame, to the amazement of every one, made no reply; and Renaud, to no one's surprise, slunk with his glass into a corner and gulped down his liquor.

"We are not here to destroy the domestic peace of the Lion d'Or," said the Parisian, "so let the toast stand 'Vive la Nation!'"

"Vive la Nation!" responded the company, and the wine disappeared, as did also Monsieur Neroc, who remounted the horse he had tied to the post at the door, and rode off towards St. Germain.

Before a fresh order of wine at the command of the Parisian had been drunk, there arrived, with a clatter of horse's hoofs and a rattling of arms and accoutrements, the Deputy Grébauval himself and a company of the National Guard.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MORT TOUS LES ARISTOCRATES!

GRÉBAUVAL, like his friend and model, Robespierre, was fastidious in his attire. Whether in the dress of a private citizen, or arrayed as a representative of the people, he was carefully barbered; still wore the tie-wig, though most of his colleagues had discarded it for their own hair, which was worn short or long according to taste or growth; paid careful attention to his linen, and combined with the air and manner of the aristocrat the revolutionary principles and jargon of the time. His blue coat with its broad lapels was scrupulously brushed and his white neckerchief pinned with a glittering brooch, and he wore a sword within a showy scabbard and with an ostentatiously fashioned hilt.

The reader can no doubt recall many instances of two men who were very much alike in appearance when seen apart from each other. Brought together, you observe how scrupulously Nature has separated them. Grébauval, in his tri-colour sash and tie-wig, with his artistically fashioned sword-hilt and fastidiously clean linen, might, to a casual observer who was acquainted with Count de Fournier, have been mistaken for that ardent royalist masquerading as a Jacobin. Seen side by side, the difference would have been marked, in gait

and manner, in facial expression and tone of voice. They were sufficiently alike, nevertheless, to be remarked upon, as we have already seen, by ordinary people; and it was of considerable moment in the development of the aspirations and adventures of the two men that this was so.

Pierre ran to the doorway, followed by the company, to receive the deputy and his escort of National Guards, brave in their new uniforms that were bright with the national colours. Madame the hostess retired to her chamber in the roof to meditate and plot her schemes of vengeance alone, her indignant soul now in permanent revolt against Pierre, who was a Girondist rather than a Jacobin, and, like many another that marched with pike against Louis and the queen, might have been royalist if royalty had maintained its station with courage as well as generosity.

He was a sturdy fellow of strong build. His arms were long, his body short in proportion, but denoting great strength. He had something of a rubicund countenance, with a nose that was a liberal indication of a festal character. He had enjoyed himself in his time. Not that it was a Bardolphean nose, though it was prominent and a trifle bulbous, and his cheeks were lumpy with a bibulous suggestiveness, but firm withal. He had white teeth and a thick crop of hair, denoting good health. Pierre was a man whom you would notice in a crowd; he was more like a Yorkshire groom than a French publican; a remarkable contrast to Jacques Renaud, a slimy, besotted, loose-lipped, pimply wretch, who had drunk away both his moral and mental faculties and had only retained the simulacrum of a once powerful frame both as to height and strength.

Jacques was in fact a giant gone wrong. He was, however, still able to terrify a few undersized mortals with his height of body and his still taller habit of boasting and brawling, a noisy imitation of reckless courage.

"Give our horses a feed and a rub down," said Grébauval, "they are weary; men are stronger than horses;

it is not simply the ride from Paris that has fatigued them; we have achieved a great victory over the common enemy; and there is a hunting to follow!"

"Vive le dëputé Grébauval!" said the host. "And whom are we hunting?"

"Vive la Nation!" shouted Jacques Renaud, "vive le grand député!" pressing forward and seizing the deputy's right hand with both his greasy fists, Grébauval releasing himself from his admirer with an impatient gesture.

"Good health," said the man with a pipe in one hand and a jug in the other. "Welcome, monsieur le député!"

"Prosper the righteous cause!" said Neroc.

"A mort tous les aristocrates!" bellowed Renaud.

"You shout too much, citizen," said Grébauval, turning upon Renaud. "Paris is not far off; if you can do more than shout, you will find an army that needs recruits, and an enemy not only in Paris but on the frontier."

"I can fight as well as shout, as any man shall find who throws down the gauntlet to Jacques Renaud!" said the patriot, retiring to a corner of the room and growling his defiance of all aristocrats.

"A word with you Pierre," said Grébauval, taking the landlord by the arm and withdrawing into madame's parlour behind the bar. "Excuse us, gentlemen, a moment."

"It is coming to pass, all I warned you of. The overture is finished, the drama has begun."

"God prosper the right," said Pierre.

"He will," was Grébauval's prompt reply. "But listen, Pierre; it is the cause now—not men, not neighbours—the cause, the people!"

"Of a surety," said Pierre, "we have groaned and suffered long enough; it is the turn of the others, yes, yes; but do not blame me if I remember the count with gratitude."

"It is of him I am here to speak," said Grébauval, fixing his searching eyes upon Pierre's frank open face.

"I knew it," said Pierre.

"He has to-day been a leading figure in the first great blow the people have struck in Paris; has had his horse shot from under him, and is on his way to the Château de Louvet on foot."

"Yet he had joined the newly-organised company of hussars, monsieur," said Pierre.

"Yes, and wore his uniform for the first time."

"He supported the National Assembly," continued Pierre.

"Did he so?" remarked Grébauval.

"And was about to leave Paris to join his illustrious comrade, the General Lafayette."

"Whose loyalty is very much in question, friend Pierre."

"Nay?—then whom shall we trust?"

"Well, you at least are not suspected," Grébauval replied, "and I am about to commit an important duty to you."

"Thank you, monsieur le député. I hope it is a duty I may like."

"It is a duty you must like, Pierre. It is not for true patriots to consider what they like, but what is necessary for the safety of France."

"Name the duty you confide to me, if you please," said Pierre, with something like a defiant glance at Grébauval, with whom he was not by any means having his first awkward interview.

"Henri Lavelle, whom you call Count de Fournier—"

"Call?" said Pierre. "But he is Count de Fournier; who questions it?"

"No matter," said Grébauval. "A file of the National Guard, or perhaps a company of gendarmerie, are on his track; one or the other will halt at your door; you will receive them."

"Certainly," said Pierre.

"Your Count de Fournier—since you still love titles—will also make his way to the Lion d'Or; he will trust to that gratitude you spoke of. Be warned, Pierre; to shelter him may mean arrest, perhaps death; I do not ask you to take part against him; but aid and abet him, and I cannot save you."

"I am not a brute beast," said Pierre, looking Grébauval steadily in the eye, and thrusting his strong hands into his breeches pockets.

"No, you are a free man, with the right to choose who shall govern you, and a voice equal to the voice of kings."

"No voice, king's or people's, will induce me to raise a hand against Count Henri de Fournier."

"I don't ask you to raise a hand against him; but to be neutral, not to aid his escape."

"I will promise nothing."

"You will."

"Who will make me?"

"I will."

"Your father once said that to me, and did he make me? No man makes me do what I will not."

"You will lose your head, Pierre," said Grébauval, impatiently.

"Others will fall when mine goes, depend upon it," said Pierre, doggedly. "When your father——"

"Don't speak of my father," said Grébauval, quickly.

"I am speaking of the merchant, not the count of that day," said Pierre, drawing himself up as if in preparation for a blow.

"You have been set on to say these things, and, by heavens, I will punish you!"

"I dare say you will; if you are willing to hunt your brother to death, why, in God's name, should you spare the old servant of your reputed father?"

"Speak lower, curse you," said Grébauval. "Do you dare to call this Henri of the aristocracy my brother?"

"Yes, I dare; for I know he is, and you know it, too," said Pierre, slowly, and still in an attitude of defence.

"And do you think that knowledge will shield him?"

"It should do so, the same blood running in your veins."

"The same blood! What do you call the same blood? Can honour and dishonour mingle? Can ditch-water and the clean stream come together and be

pure? Have you ever spoken to the count of these matters?"

"Never," said Pierre.

"I know how true you were to the wronged husband of my mother, how you served them both, how you defended, at the risk of your life, the questioned honour of my mother——"

"I know you do; and you know how the lad Henri, when only a stripling, saved the wretched life I was willing to lay down for my master; and yet you come here to dictate to me and give me orders, as if I were a swine of a Jacques Renaud. Know better, Monsieur Grébauval, know better; you take your way, I take mine."

"Give me your hand, old friend. I am in the wrong."

"It is nobly said," Pierre replied, holding forth his broad, strong hand.

"Come what may, Pierre, I am your friend. You are on the roll of the patriot people; but the nation looks for deeds, not words; the day may come when my friendship may not avail to save you; it is a stern *régime* that begins from to-day; beware how you betray the sacred cause!"

"The sacred cause can count on me in all honour and Christian dealing," said Pierre. "God knows I have no reason to love the aristocrat, with some exceptions, if you please."

"I know your exceptions; but have a care."

"I am not for tyranny and famine. I am poorer this year than last, was poorer last than the year before, and the country has been betrayed, that I believe; but ask me to hand over to death a man who has always forgotten that he is an aristocrat when he has honoured the Lion d'Or, and the cause may go to the devil first —so there, monsieur le député Grébauval!"

"As you will, Pierre Grappin, as you will," said Grébauval.

By this time the horses had been fed and rubbed down, and the deputy's companions, who had taken their refreshment in the general room, were already

remounting at the door. One who was addressed by his fellows as Captain Marcy, gave the word to Grébauval, who, dropping one last warning into Pierre's ear, rode off with his company in the direction of the Château.

CHAPTER IX.

A SEA OF TROUBLES.

FOREMOST among the gallant defenders of royalty on the fatal 10th of August, when the Duke and Duchess de Louvet were innocently, not to say recklessly, preparing to receive their ceremonious guests, Count de Fournier was a conspicuous actor in the tragedy.

The king had plenty of troops and faithful guards to hold his own against all the black-browed Marseillais and red-caps of the faubourgs, but there wanted that day a king with the physical courage of a Maillé and the *élan* of a de Fournier. Maillé was there, brave as an old lion, and Mandat, with his fiery staff, and the king's Swiss body-guard, ready to fight like warriors, and to die like heroes. They were ready and under arms all the night of the 9th; ready and under arms on the morning of the 10th.

De Fournier was there in his bright new uniform as an officer of hussars, his black shako, with its defiant feather, his quaint hair-plaits, his blue and gold jacket, with its fur trimming and gold facings, his red vest and bright gilt buttons; a veritable *beau sabreur*, full of youthful ardour. He was not the least distinguished-looking representative of the ancient noblesse among the patricians who surrounded the king, drawn thither by loyalty and sentiment. They were in various costumes, private, official, and military; but few had arrived on horseback. De Fournier, for the time being, had joined the staff of the commander of the heavy dragoons in an honorary capacity, and made a nota-

ble appearance among the different uniforms. The dragoons numbered nine hundred men and officers, and they were supported by twelve pieces of artillery. The gendarmerie à cheval were an almost equally important force; but, like the National Guard, they were unfortunately not to be trusted. They deserted, in fact, before the night of the 9th was over. Pétion, the mayor, by traitorous arrangement with the rebel chiefs, went to the insurrectionary headquarters at the Hôtel de Ville, and summoned Mandat, the commander of the National Guard, who was murdered *en route.* His death was a heavy blow to the royalist defence.

When the king reviewed the troops at five in the morning, de Fournier and the rest of his volunteer escort by his side, the battalion of the Croix rouge raised the cry of "Vive la Nation!" A regiment of pikemen, defiling before the king, shouted "Vive Pétion!" and "A bas Louis Veto!" The king lost all the little spirit of resistance he had hitherto displayed, and went back to the queen depressed and wretched.

If her majesty had possessed half the power with which she was credited, she might have saved the king and the country even at this supreme moment. "Everything you hold most dear," she said to the grenadiers of the National Guard, "your homes, your wives, your children, depends on our existence. To-day our cause is that of the people."

But the people, swarming with pike and gun outside the palace gates, thought differently, and the king could not be persuaded to stand by his faithful troops. Otherwise, there was a moment that morning when the Swiss Guard alone would have turned the fortunes of the day, and rescued France from a nightmare of horrors and Frenchmen from a lasting blot on their humanity; though it should never be forgotten that if the revolution developed a fiendish devilry that eclipses the worst pages of savage history, it also has redeeming instances of virtue and heroism among the persecuted of all classes, noble and bourgeoise, that are equally without parallel in the records of insurrection and revolt.

What need to do more than merely recall the mistakes and blunders, the horrors and the heroism, the marching and counter-marching, the desperate fighting, and the equally desperate running away, the temerities and braveries, and the ultimate massacres of that awful day? Is not European history full of it? Do not the pages of Carlyle exhale the odours of its burnt powder and its weltering corpses? "Oh, ye gallant Swiss, ye gallant gentlemen in black, for what cause are ye to spend and be spent!" Thrust by Fate into their midst when royalty vanished for ever and left them to their unhappy lot, ordered to lay down their arms, Count de Fournier was tossed hither and thither on the tide of steel and intermittent explosion of guns, fighting with all his might, finding in every foeman a Grébauval, and wiping out in every stroke the memory of the humiliation of that sudden duel outside the Château de Louvet. A veritable pandemonium, nothing like it since Milton told the story of the revolt in heaven; a chaos of men and arms in the wildest action, even if you could have seen it from on high; nothing in the midst of it for de Fournier but men demoniac in murderous rage or pangs of death.

At last, betrayal and rout; betrayal of the king, betrayal by Louis of his most devoted troops. Backed by artillery, mad with an unexpected triumph after their overwhelming defeat at the beginning of the day, the rioters carried fury and carnage into the palace. De Fournier with the dragoons had made an ineffectual stand, in the open, on foot with a few officers of the royal body-guard, but had for a time withstood the massacre in the palace. The king's final order to lay down their arms had left the Swiss all but defenceless, and utterly demoralised the royalist nobles who had rallied to the support of the king.

There was a running fight from staircase to staircase, from room to room throughout the palace, which at length became a hideous massacre. A few escaped by leaping from the windows. De Fournier was a marked man. His unfortunately conspicuous uniform, which should have saved him, only augmented his danger. The palace was in flames, and the multitude were at-

tacking the fire brigade that had arrived on the spot to extinguish the flames, when de Fournier, dazed and bleeding, found his way into the Rue St. Honoré, and obtained shelter in the passage-way of an empty house at the back of the Church of St. Roch, whose storm-bell with the other furious tintinnabulary performances of the day had invaded the peace of the Rue Barnabé.

Jaffray Ellicott, a spectator of so much of the attack on the Tuileries as was possible for lookers-on, had more than once caught sight of the ubiquitous Count de Fournier, and had seen him cross the Rue St. Honoré, but from that moment had lost all trace of him.

The count, finding that his wounds were not serious, wiped his sword upon his torn uniform, resheathed it, breathed a short prayer of gratitude and supplication, and sallied forth from his temporary shelter. Every narrow street and court seemed to be deserted. Citizens who had not locked themselves in their houses were taking part in the insurrection, or looking on at the fighting and massacres. He paused to debate whether he could not safely reach his own hôtel, which was close to La Madeleine, and there rehabilitate himself; but approaching the Place Vendôme he once more came in contact with a fanfaronading crowd hurrying from the faubourg. Furthermore, he had one desire in his mind, which was to reach the Château de Louvet as soon as the news of the disaster of the Tuileries should have travelled thither. It was not unlikely, he thought, that Grébauval might in some villainous way utilise the event to advance his purpose against Mathilde. The duke had made the ceremony of espousal so public that Grébauval would easily find excuse to make a patriotic demonstration at the Château if the sanguinary business in Paris did not occupy all his attention.

De Fournier was right in suspecting that Grébauval would not, in his love of liberty, forget his own immediate interests or desires. "Grébauval first and France next" represented Grébauval's principle, and he was not singular in this, nor is the fashion of his patriotism out of date. So de Fournier, by devious routes, made for the Lion d'Or on his way to the Château, hoping to

obtain useful news from Pierre Grappin, and perhaps a horse for the completion of his journey.

Having reconnoitred the locality of La Madeleine, he made for the Champs-Elysées, and found points of shelter as he advanced among the trees. Once he had a narrow escape, coming suddenly upon a wounded Swiss guardsman who was cut down with yells of execration by a dozen sansculottes with pikes and knives. Fortunately they were all too blown with their exertions to have chased de Fournier even if they had seen him. He was half inclined to have fallen upon them red-handed, but the uselessness of his vengeance, and the risk of it to himself, came to him like a flash of thought for Mathilde, and he pursued his course, but with his sword drawn for emergencies. As he kept on, however, he saw fewer and fewer persons, and crossing the open country between the furthest outskirts of the Faubourg St. Honoré and Monceau seemed almost to be comfortably free from possible molest. A company of horsemen, however, turned him for a while out of his route. He pulled up beneath an ancient cluster of planes to observe the ruins of the gate of Montmartre. It had been recently burnt, and the way was clear.

Gradually he now left Paris well behind him, but he sickened as he thought of the scenes through which he had passed, and marvelled that he was alive to thank God for his merciful preservation. To think that on this day of all others he was to be betrothed, on this day of all red days in the year! But who could have dreamed, when the duke marked it down in his calendar, that patriotism would be tearing the uniforms of the smitten Swiss into strips to decorate its pikes and celebrate amidst blood and pillage the downfall of royalty in Paris!

CHAPTER X.

"LONG LIVE THE KING!"

JACQUES RENAUD, who had stood outside the Lion d'Or with the rest of Pierre's guests to cheer the officers of the people on their way to the Château, was the first to see Count de Fournier pushing his way along the road towards the inn.

"Ah, here he comes, with his head cracked, ragged and torn, a hussar without a horse, muddy and thirsty, a tramp. Vive la Nation!" he shouted, flinging his cap into the air.

"Well, give him room," said Pierre, picking up the greasy headgear of his slouching guest and flinging it into the porchway.

"Give him a halter!" said the Parisian.

"Don't rob the gallows," growled Renaud, as he slunk into the house before the threatening looks of Pierre.

"A bas tous les aristocrates!" roared the rest, except the man with the pipe, who made way for de Fournier as the ragged hussar walked straight through the group and entered the house. His sword clanked on the doorstep, and he swung his way with an effort into the common room and flung himself into a chair. His left arm pained him badly, and for a moment he felt half like fainting; but the sympathetic face of Pierre cheered him, and he knew that to falter before the crowd about him would be to court insult, perhaps worse.

"Pierre, my good fellow, give me some wine; I'm perishing of thirst."

The swaggering guests followed de Fournier into the common room.

"A mort tous les aristocrates!" shouted Jacques Renaud. "A bas Louis Veto!"

"Wine, Pierre," said de Fournier; and the willing

landlord responded with a full goblet. The fugitive drained it, and heaved a great sigh of relief.

"Sir," said the man with the pipe, "I fear it becomes our duty to place you under arrest. We do not like our duty; but duty is duty!"

"No doubt," said the count, looking round upon the company and measuring their strength and their weakness with a wary eye. The only arms among them were a couple of knives, one in the belt of Jacques, another worn by the smoker.

"Yes, it is our duty; and, *mort de Dieu*, we'll do it!" said Jacques, lumbering up against de Fournier's chair. "A mort les rois et les aristocrates!"

As Jacques, encouraged by the valour of numbers, stretched out his hand towards de Fournier, the count seized him by the throat and forced him upon his knees, at the same time drawing his sword with a dangerous sweep that scattered the bully's companions.

"Shout 'Vive le Roi!' or by the living God I'll kill you."

Jacques drew his knife, which with a deft cut of the count's sword flew from his hand, to be at once seized upon by the Parisian.

"Stand back, canaille; back, you swine!" said de Fournier, between his teeth. "He shall shout 'Vive le Roi!' By all the saints, he shall. Shout, you brute, shout!"

The count's sword at the coward's throat, Jacques shouted "Vive le Roi'" Not loud enough to shake the rafters, but "Vive le Roi!" was his undoubted utterance as he scrambled from his knees, the perspiration bursting from every pore in his body. "On compulsion," he said; "under protest," at which moment the Parisian seized the count from behind, to be instantly flung aside by Pierre.

"This way, count," said Pierre, his usually rubicund face paling with anxiety, but his lips tight and his eyes full of danger to the recoiling patriots.

As the count followed his host, Pierre turned upon the blatent patriots with a brace of pistols which he drew from his ample breeches pockets.

"PIERRE TURNED UPON THE BLATANT PATRIOTS WITH A BRACE OF PISTOLS."

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"I'll give you a dose of lead with your liquor if you stir an inch!"

"That's a horse of another colour," said the Parisian. "We don't war with our host."

"I'll hold them in check, monsieur le comte," said Pierre, "while you get away. There's a good mare in the stable, my old roan; here's a pistol. Take the bridle-path down by the firs; don't go to the Château —Grébauval and his Guards will be there before you. Keep to the right; make for my sister's cottage, she will hide you; at night I will join you. Nay, for God's sake, do as I tell you,"

"All right, Pierre, old fellow," said the count, grasping his friend's hand. "The saints guard you! You'll need more than mortal defence, I fear."

"Not from cowards such as those," said Pierre; and so they parted. But the count had escaped too many dangers that day to ride for any other house than the Château, whither Grébauval and his companions were now approaching at a leisurely trot.

"Now, my beauty," said de Fournier, mounting Pierre's sure-footed roan, "there are more roads than one to Rome."

It was neither the bridle-path nor the highway that de Fournier took, but a short cut down in the valley of the brook that fed the lake in the de Louvet grounds and through the coppice beyond, a steeple-chase course that would have delighted a horseman of to-day. Pierre's gallant roan seemed to understand what was required of her. She stopped at nothing, fence or wall, stream or ditch, until de Fournier checked her to reconnoitre the sunken fence or dry moat of the Parc de Louvet.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE TRACK OF THE GALLANT HUSSAR.

"HALT!" shouted a hoarse voice as Pierre was about to re-enter the house. He pulled down his apron and pushed the one pistol he had left into his belt.

It was unusual for Pierre to wear an apron, but, as he said, a cellar-man who has to look after his wine and his guests must not be too particular; though his man, Jean, had become much more fastidious in regard to his dress and the character of his work since there had been a talk of "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité," a mere phrase at present, except to the more ambitious organisers of the revolution that was beginning to spread with devouring force.

The word of command which had arrested Pierre's attention was given to a company of gendarmerie à cheval that had dashed up to the inn, the horses wet with foam, the men in bright new uniforms, the tri-coloured cockade in their three-cornered hats.

Under the command of an experienced officer, they were accompanied by a commissary of police wearing his official scarf. They had tracked the count to the Lion d'Or. The clue had been given to them at the burnt gate of Montmartre. Moreover, the Deputy Grébauval had named the wayside cabaret as a landmark *en route* for the Château, whither he knew his man would find his way sooner or later. He preferred that de Fournier should be taken by the commissary of police, who through his instrumentality had held a warrant for his arrest, hoping himself to impress Mathilde and the de Louvets with a pretence of his protection.

Grébauval was not only moved in his intrigues against de Fournier by his love for Mathilde, but by that bitter resentment of the bar sinister upon his

escutcheon, which, ever since he could appreciate the difference between his position and that of the Count de Fournier and the wrong done to his mother, had in his mind been a constant impulse to some great act of revengeful compensation.

It was hard upon Mathilde that fate should have made her a factor in the cruel ambition of the Deputy Grébauval, emphasised the more by the deputy's genuine and consuming passion for her, and his desire for an honourable and legitimate alliance, as both a means of vengeance and an approach to restitution of rank. There was something incongruous in this desire on the part of a leader of a revolutionary movement for the equal rights of man and the overthrow of aristocratic privileges and distinctions; but the aspirations and conduct of the leaders on all sides were full of incongruities of sentiment and action.

"Henri Lavelle, Count de Fournier," said the captain. "has he been here?"

"Yes, monsieur le capitaine," Pierre replied.

"It is punishable with death to give succour to traitors," said the commissary.

"He's no traitor, please your excellency," said Pierre.

"Don't address me as excellency," answered the commissary.

"Thank you, I will not, monsieur le préfet."

"Nor préfet either, citizen."

"Monsieur le juge, perhaps?"

"Nor judge either, citizen knave," said the commissary.

"Very well, monsieur," said Pierre. "I was only going to observe that monsieur le comte wore the uniform of the new hussars, and was *en route* to join the national troops on the frontier."

"Oh, that was his allegation, eh?" said the commissary, making a memorandum in his note-book.

"Everybody hereabouts knows that, monsieur," said Pierre.

"But everybody does not know that he disgraced his uniform by a murderous resistance of the people this morning in the grounds of the Carrousel," replied

the commissary. "Enough. Citizen Pierre, where is this model hussar in his new uniform?"

"May it please your excellency," said Pierre, "his uniform was not new when he came here."

"Peace, knave; where is the man, Henri Lavelle?"

"Messieurs, the traitor has fled," said Jacques, bustling out into the road; the rest of his companions sufficiently subdued by their recent humiliation to content themselves by looking on from the window.

"Fled! Whither?"

"Pierre knows," said Jacques. "Pierre protected him; Pierre threatened us with his pistols; he has them beneath his apron."

"And he'll blow your head off with them," said Pierre, turning upon the vociferating gobe-mouche, "for a liar and a coward!"

"Will he? Oh, messieurs, protect an unarmed citizen! He forced me to shout 'Vive le Roi!'"

"Then he's a fool for his pains—a bigger fool than Deputy Grébauval thinks him; there is no longer a king in France."

"Vive la Nation!" shouted Pierre, backing towards the door, as the commanding officer slid from his horse and handed the reins to his orderly.

"Out of the way," he said, pushing Jacques aside. "What is this, Pierre? Explain to monsieur le commissaire."

"Pardon, monsieur; are you the commander of gendarmerie? Then I have a message for you from monsieur le député Grébauval. He baited his troop here, and has ridden on to the Château de Louvet. Monsieur le député is well known to me, and trusts me for an honest patriot," said Pierre, with, for him, an unusual multiplication of words, intended to delay the pursuit of de Fournier as much as possible.

"Well, that is not unknown to the commissary," said the officer, "otherwise you would have been under arrest by this time."

"Indeed! monsieur le capitaine; and for what offence, may a humble citizen ask?"

"The offence of contumacy," said the commissary.

"Never heard of the crime before; what in particular may it be?" asked Pierre.

"Silence, knave," said the commander, seizing Pierre by the collar. "Listen, and answer straight. You say you have a message for me; what is it?"

"It was the wish of monsieur le député that you should waste no time at the Lion d'Or, but proceed to the Château, where he would await you."

"And this Fournier?"

"It is true he halted here and took refreshment. I had no warrant to stay him. He is a friend of my illustrious neighbour, the Duke de Louvet."

"Patriots have no longer friends among aristocrats, and aristocrats are not illustrious," said the captain.

"But there are well-known and distinguished patriots among the guests of her graciousness the duchess."

"Her graciousness!" said the officer, with a sneer.

"I said so," observed Pierre, with well-affected simplicity.

"Citoyenne would better become the lips of a patriot than duchess or excellency or graciousness; and such change will soon be made compulsory by law."

"I thank you for the information," said Pierre, still gravely unsophisticated in his manner.

"You live very much outside the barriers," said the officer, with a superior smile.

"That is so, indeed," replied Pierre. "I seldom go to Paris; I am a home bird."

"Perhaps you don't know that the people have razed the Bastille to the earth?"

"Oh, yes, monsieur, I had heard of that; also of the death of Louis the Fifteenth," said Pierre with an affected simplicity of manner that did not disguise the cynicism of his quiet banter.

"Really, you surprise me; one of these days I shouldn't wonder you may hear of the death of Louis the Sixteenth."

"It is what we have all to come to," said Pierre.

"But in different ways," said the officer; "add that as a reflection among your efforts at humour, Pierre Grappin."

"I will, citizen captain," said Pierre.

"And when you refer to your calendar for the date of the demolition of the Bastille, don't forget that there are other prisons in Paris."

"I will remember," said Pierre, his rubicund face as expressionless as he could make it.

"Monsieur le commissaire will tell you," continued the officer, "that the law is using those other prisons to put away the men who would have filled the Bastille with patriots."

"Ah, I am so ignorant of these things," said Pierre.

"The plea of ignorance would not serve you even thus far, my friend, but for the protection of the Deputy Grébauval," said the commissary.

"I salute the honoured name of the most excellent deputy," said Pierre, carrying his right hand to his strong square forehead with its shock of black hair.

"In that you honour yourself," said the officer, who during the conversation had been carefully studying Pierre, while the commissary was making a mental note of the inn and its surroundings.

"Merci, monsieur le capitaine," said Pierre.

"And now," said the commissary, pushing his horse forward, "what of this Count de Fournier so-called? Where is he? Be on your guard. The law has a strong arm."

"I bow to your excellency," said Pierre.

"You will bow to the axe or the gallows, all in good time, I make no doubt," said the commissary. "In the meantime, bow to their representative's demand—where is this aristocratic friend of yours?"

"The Count de Fournier? said Pierre, with stolid face and manner.

"The same."

"Oh, he also went to the Château."

"When?"

"Almost this instant!"

"How, sir?"

"Why, on horseback."

"Who provided the horse?"

"He took one from my stables."

"Did he so?" said the commissary.

"Yes, monsieur."

"Why did you not say so before?"

"I have been trying to tell you all the time," said Pierre; "but both your excellencies have had so much to say, thanks to your great politeness."

"You're a fool," said the commander of the gendarmerie, remounting his horse.

"Then your count left as we came up?" said the commissary, reining his horse in by the side of the commander.

"Yes, monsieur."

"Your word on it, as a true citizen," said the officer.

"My solemn word," said Pierre, "truly given."

"We take your word," said the commissary, not willing that the soldier should seem too important in presence of the man of law; "and if you lie to us we'll take your life, be assured of that."

"Thank you," said Pierre. "May I have the honour to offer your excellencies a little refreshment?"

"Let us on," said the commissary to the commander of the gendarmerie.

"Attention! Right wheel! Forward!" shouted the officer, and away the company rattled along the white road, disappearing in a cloud of dust that the recent brief shower had been insufficient to lay, though it had freshened the trees and left the sky the clearer for the downfall.

The afternoon was beginning to change into evening. While the sun was declining a faint crescent in the east gave Pierre his first glance of the new moon, whereupon he turned over a few coins he had in his pocket, and at the same time turned his pistol also. "For luck," he said to himself; "and we shall all want a lot of it to contend against those beasts!"

"Here's a devil of a go!" said Jean, the man-of-all-work at the Lion d'Or. "Master Grappin, you're wanted."

"No, Master Grappin, you are not," said the gaunt wife of his bosom, nick-named Madame Angélique, stalking from the house with a blood-red flag in her

left hand and a drawn sword in the other. "We don't want you; we are for France, not for the Austrian; we are the children of the people, not the slaves of tyrants. On, my friends, to Paris!"

She had turned from addressing Pierre to the motley company who had been spouting and drinking in the common room of the Lion d'Or,—Jacques sporting a cockade of abnormal proportions, the others similarly decorated by Madame Angélique, who had, during the previous half-hour, been calmly occupying herself with preparations to leave the inn and give her rasping voice and bony arm to the service of the patriots in Paris.

"Children of France, indeed!" said Pierre. "France ought to be very proud of you,—eh, Jean?"

"France has a good deal to answer for," said Jean, laughing, while he stepped aside from the threatening knife of Jacques Renaud, who, having flourished his blade, thrust it into his belt and shouted, "Vive Madame Grappin!" which Neroc supplemented with "Vive Madame Angélique!"

"A bas les tyrans!" said Neroc, calmly.

"Forward!" shouted Madame Angélique, flourishing her red flag, and placing herself at the head of the dozen curiously-assorted topers and travellers, the Parisian holding himself partly aloof and watching Pierre with an amused expression. "Forward! Vive le Peuple!"

Pierre looked on scornfully, but not without regret; for, though he and his wife had rarely been on friendly terms, he did not forget that she was his wife, and as he looked upon her with her flashing eyes and wrinkled cheeks, his mind recurred to the day when he walked with her to church and she was tall and willowy, with a fresh smooth face and red sweet lips.

"Ah, what a changing business this world is!" he remarked to Jean, as the little stream of life, with its red token tossing on the tiny waves, swept on to join other streams that were pouring into Paris to overwhelm her in a mighty flood. "I remember that woman, Jean, when she was fair to look upon."

"No!" exclaimed Jean.

"'WE ARE FOR FRANCE, NOT FOR THE AUSTRIAN . . . ON, MY FRIENDS, TO PARIS.'"

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"And sang in the convent of St. Ursula."

"You don't say so, Monsieur Grappin!"

"And had long fair hair," went on Pierre, his eyes following the line of the road where she and her companions were raising the dust, "eyes that were soft, and manners that were even gentle, my friend."

"You don't say so, Monsieur Pierre?"

"Yes, I do say so, and, by all the saints, I was proud of her. Why, when I courted her I was the favourite of twenty swains, and by St. Ursula, I swear to you, Jean, I would have eaten every one of them if they had chosen to fight for her!"

"They'd ha' been a tough mouthful," said Jean.

"She's been a tougher of late years, Jean."

"And none knows that better than I do, Master Pierre," Jean replied. "And on the contrary, such is fate, I had the best woman that ever lived for a wife, and she be dead, but yours lives to shame you."

"That's so, Jean, that's so; and yet I can't help thinking of mine when she was young and handsome, and sung in the convent of St. Ursula."

"Keep to that thought, Master Grappin, and forget the rest."

"And now," said Pierre, thrusting his hands into his pockets, and not heeding the sympathetic and wise advice of Jean, "she is going to sing in a choir of devils."

"They are singing now, the lot of 'em," said Jean; "it's the Carmagnole."

As madame and her comrades turned the bend of the road and disappeared, harsh vocal strains, the song of the Revolution, floated lazily on the calm air.

"Ah, well," said Pierre, turning away, but still apostrophising his gasconading partner, "you were never a wife to me; always a wrangling termagant, though so promising of happy days when I courted you, and so disappointing after the feast was over; only a discontented, ill-tempered scold, that's all you ever were or will be, from the time I brought you home and gave you my keys; and so, farewell, and the devil take your damnable escort!"

CHAPTER XII.

MORE ARRIVALS AT THE LION D'OR.

"By all means," said a new comer, who had arrived on the scene unobserved by either Pierre or his man Jean, so intent had they been on the army of Angélique; "they are assuredly a scurvy lot."

"Ah, Monsieur Bertin," said Pierre, "welcome a thousand times. Where is your horse, monsieur?"

"Gaston was to meet me here, with Monsieur de la Galetierre and Delauny's two sons; we and a few others are *en route* for St. Germain. I have walked across the fields from the Château de Louvet; called there to pay my respects and apologise for my absence from the ceremonial. Something wrong there, Pierre; had no time to make inquiries, bound by my rendezvous here; our business at St. Germain is what may be called a State affair."

"Jean," said Pierre, "go and clear the tables of the empty glasses, and open the windows wide to get the horrid flavour of Jacques Renaud out of the house."

Jean had shown too keen an interest in Monsieur Bertin's conversation, and Pierre had begun to come under the influence that later on filled the prisons with suspects and fed the guillotine with innocent blood.

"You have had a rough company here," said Monsieur Bertin.

"My wife has joined them, and they have just started for Paris," Pierre replied.

"Was that indeed your wife? I caught sight of a woman as I skirted the back of the house. And was that Madame Grappin?"

"It was indeed!" said Pierre.

"I sympathise with you," Monsieur Bertin replied. "Who would have thought the wife of honest Pierre Grappin would have come to that! Why, Pierre, my friend, I remember when you were married."

"Yes; I was only just now thinking of that very day myself," said Pierre.

"You have not had a very good time of it with her, I fear," said Monsieur Bertin.

"A very bad time," said Pierre; "otherwise I might have been rich—anyhow, I should have been happy."

"Ah well, old friend, you were always a good fellow; and the education dear old Father Languedoc gave you was a blessing not bestowed on every farmer's son."

"That's true," said Pierre, "I mean about the good father; but one's learning is one's ignorance, Monsieur Bertin, in these days."

"We have fallen on evil times, Pierre."

"The world's upside down," said Pierre.

"And which side are you on?" asked Monsieur Bertin.

"My wife is singing the Carmagnole and banding with ruffians. I had an idea I was on their side."

"Well, it looks as if they were going to be uppermost —for a time at least."

"I thought we'd had enough of kings and taxes and dear bread and no trade," said Pierre, "and I belong to the people."

"So do I, Pierre, so do I," said Monsieur Bertin, "not to be butchered, however, because I don't wear sabots and pick my teeth with my knife, Pierre."

"Patriotism is exacting, I allow, Monsieur Bertin, and I'm for moderation, my voice goes for what it is worth with the Girondists. But I don't want to murder my friend because he is not of my opinion, and the dear old Father Languedoc advised me that gratitude is a virtue that counts scores of good marks in the books of St. Peter."

"And he was right, Pierre, which brings us to the de Louvets. I know that on both sides of Virtue's ledger you have an account, debtor and creditor."

"I would lay my life down for any one of them," said Pierre, with an enthusiasm that heightened his already glowing face.

"And I know that the duke would make a sacrifice for you, Pierre; he is a punctilious gentleman, proud

of his order, but he has a big heart, Pierre, and is a true Frenchman."

"None better, Monsieur Bertin, none better," said Pierre.

"Very well, then, what is the matter at the Château de Louvet?"

"Everything is the matter," said Pierre.

"You confirm my fears."

"It is possible that the saints have brought you here at this time. How many friends are with you?"

"There will be eight of us, Pierre."

"And I and Jean will make ten," said Pierre. "I was going to remark that it might be that the good Lord had sent you to the aid of our noble count and the dear good people at the Château."

At this moment there rode up to the inn the other friends of Monsieur Bertin.

"And Gaston will make eleven," said Pierre to himself.

They were all well mounted. Gaston was leading his master's horse. M. de la Galetierre and two others were in military uniforms. They all wore swords. Several of them carried pistols. Having regard to the possibility of their mission to St. Germain being not altogether free from danger, they were, indeed, well armed, a fact which Pierre noticed with much satisfaction.

"No, Pierre," said Monsieur Bertin, "we will not dismount."

"Jean," called out Pierre, "wine for Monsieur Bertin and his honoured friends."

Jean bustled into the house, and presently came forth with bottles and glasses.

"Just a stirrup-cup, messieurs," said Monsieur Bertin, "we have no time for more."

"But I fear it is a terrible business at the Château," said Pierre. "And you have not heard of the awful disasters in Paris?"

They had heard sad and strange rumours, but nothing in the way of detail.

"The Tuileries taken by the mob; the king a pris-

oner, the queen and the dauphin, too; monsieur le comte de Fournier wounded and a fugitive—hunted, messieurs, at this moment, perhaps arrested even at the espousal of the Duc de Louvet's daughter," said Pierre, rattling on at a great rate, while the horsemen drew closer together to listen.

"Go on, Pierre; go on," said M. de la Galetierre.

"The Deputy Grébauval aspired to the hand of Mademoiselle Mathilde; he has ridden on to the Château with a captain of the National Guard, and if monsieur le comte has not taken refuge *en route* he is at the Château; a company of gendarmerie and a commissary of police have come forward to arrest him, and, who knows, to take the entire family, perhaps, and——"

"How many of the gendarmerie?" asked the fiery young son of M. Delauny.

"Some dozen," said Pierre.

Before the young fellow could give utterance to the impulsive words that were on his lips, three Swiss soldiers started into the road from a dip by the way that had hitherto hidden them. Seeing the horsemen at the Lion d'Or, they paused with looks of fear and surprise, but the next moment made a dash for the wood on the other side of the road.

"Arrétez, messieurs!" shouted Pierre. "We are friends. 'Vivent les Suisses!'"

Only one of the men understood French. He stopped, while his companions rushed into the road.

"'Vivent les Suisses!'" again shouted Pierre, running towards the one who had halted. "Call your comrades back; we are for the king."

The soldier shouted to his friends, who presently reappeared, and the three approached Monsieur Bertin and his friends.

"Where are you going?" asked Monsieur Bertin.

"If possible, to Courbevoie," said the spokesman of the three.

"And why in fear?—and bleeding, too, I see?"

"Has not monsieur heard? Paris is in flames. It is a massacre."

"Nay, not so, is it? Only the Tuileries?" said M. de la Galetierre.

"His majesty withdrew from us. To lay down our arms, they said. It was to give us up to death. We know not why. Oh, messieurs, our comrades are cut to pieces, their bodies are given over to mutilation and insult, and to——"

Noticing that the man was faint and weak, Monsieur Bertin said, "Well, my man, anyhow, you are safe. Pierre, my good fellow, take them in, and let them wash and eat and rest."

"Jean, see to our guests, the brave Swiss," said Pierre; and Jean led the way, the soldiers pathetically smiling their thanks, even the spokesman being too much overcome to express his gratitude.

"Messieurs," said Pierre, addressing Monsieur Bertin and the rest, but more particularly keeping his eye upon the younger son of M. Delauny, "surely it is well you rest here a while."

"Yes, I think so," said the young fellow.

"There is a moon, it is very young, but the night is clear; it is not so dark that you will need torches, and you will desire to learn from these Swiss soldiers what has really been going on in Paris."

"We know enough, Pierre, and we have business which is made the more pressing by what has transpired there."

"Moreover, messieurs," said Pierre, looking first at young Delauny and then at M. de la Galetierre, "it may be the duty of the royalist friends of France to lend a hand to the brave and unfortunate Count de Fournier."

"That's true," said young Delauny.

"These are wicked times; who knows how soon yourselves, messieurs, may want a friend?"

"Well said, honest friend," answered M. de la Galetierre.

"Pierre has a diplomatic and a persuasive tongue," remarked Monsieur Bertin.

"But it seems to me he is right," said M. de la Galetierre. "If the noblesse do not stand together, what is going to become of them?"

"Our father's last words when we left Dijon," said the other Delauny.

"Can you send a messenger to St. Germain?" asked Monsieur Bertin, "to explain the delay in our possible arrival there?"

"I will ride ahead, if it please you," said Gaston, the faithful retainer of the Bertin family.

"Very well," said Monsieur Bertin; "if it is your wish that we rest here awhile, Gaston shall go before us to St. Germain."

"We are of one mind," said the elder Delauny. "What say you, messieurs?"

"Yes, yes," was the general answer.

"Then let us put up our horses; and, Pierre, you shall make us acquainted with the Lion d'Or's best vintage."

"With pleasure, Monsieur Bertin," said Pierre, a daring scheme of intervention between a certain company of gendarmerie and a probable prisoner developing in his ingenious mind.

Each gentleman, as he dismounted, led his horse to the stables, Jean assisting; but it was deemed advisable that one of the company should stand sentinel in the yard. The duty was entrusted to young Delauny, who volunteered at once. He paced the yard in front of the stable-door with a soldierly air, rattling his spurs and clanking his sword, the sous-lieutenant of a regiment of dragoons newly recruited.

"It's one thing to arrest a man, another thing to land him," said Pierre, as he filled a basket of his best red wine. "And there's a deal of valour in good wine, when it is backed by true friendship; and not a brave heart of them that does not love the open-handed young Henri, Count de Fournier."

CHAPTER XIII.

AT THE CHÂTEAU DE LOUVET.

MORE than once the Duchess de Louvet had drawn to her receptions advanced members of the National Assembly. General Lafayette had been one of her constant friends. The duke had even tolerated the American hero, who still retained a friendly intercourse with the Count de Fournier, although they had long ceased to be in political sympathy with each other.

The duke generally found business or pleasure elsewhere when the duchess crowded her country house with summer guests or her town quarters with Parisian society. She had not been born in the purple, as the duke had. Her origin had linked the bourgeoise of trade with the cordon bleu. She had been a beauty in her time, and married the duke for wealth and station, he taking her in a freak of passion which soon came to an end. They tolerated each other—loved each other, the duke called it—for a month or two, and then both discovered separate individual amusements and occupations, but they were united in a sincere devotion to their only child, Mathilde.

It was more for the sake of Mathilde than to satisfy her own inclinations that the duchess had cultivated certain prominent leaders of the democracy of Paris, though she was more at home with members of the National Assembly and their wives than ever she had been with the high noblesse.

Mathilde was a true descendant of the de Louvet family, her pride somewhat tempered by the democratic influences of the times. She was not what the vulgar world calls beautiful, a model for a painter, neither a Venus nor a Galatea; but she was a sweet womanly creature, tall, graceful, with an intellectual face, fine eyes, a gracious carriage, and an amiable dis-

position. The expression of her face was not always alike; there was nothing monotonous in it.

Conventional beauty is a known quantity; you note its eyebrows, its chiselled nose, its shell-like ears, the contour of its neck, the perfect curves of its coral lips, and so on; but the beauty that lasts has a good deal to do with the brain that is behind the pretty face and the heart that beats in the white bosom.

Mathilde de Louvet was unaffected, sincere and French in all those little unnameable charms that have given lessons to all nationalities. Her complexion was unusually fair and rosy for a Frenchwoman; otherwise she possessed the de Louvet characteristics, the oval face, short upper lip, delicately rounded chin, well-formed mouth, and a dignified repose of manner.

She loved the young Count de Fournier, but had a keen sense of the duty she owed to her parents; and it is quite possible that had they been united in pressing upon her the suit of the Deputy Grébauval she might have sacrified her feelings and inclination upon the altar of obedience; nor would this have been an unusual thing in France, where to this day parents consider they have the right to select husbands for their daughters. But Mathilde was encouraged in her refusal of Grébauval by her father's objection to such a match, and also by a sentiment of family pride.

For the hour together Mathilde on this fatal August day had sat looking out from her window over the broad country stretching away to the Seine and the woods and meadows of Courbevoie beyond, with its unreaped fields of yellow corn, its browning forest trees, and its bright blue sky.

Up to the very morning which was to usher in the sweet hour of her betrothal to the man she loved, her mother had urged postponement, predicting some terrible denouement of the ceremonial. The duchess had not dared to be frank with her daughter or the duke touching the more than vague warnings of Grébauval, St. Just, and other wire-pullers of the Assembly.

She had intrigued with both parties, king's men and people's men, and at one time had nearly succeeded in

negotiating a league for the king with more than one democratic leader. Chabot and Bazire had as good as promised their allegiance, and she had, through a trusted friend, approached Danton, but nothing she could say or do would touch Grébauval; what hold she had upon him was through her daughter, and this only went to the extent of procuring privileges for the family and encouragement in the acceptance of the duchess's social invitations among certain of the notable revolutionary leaders of the time.

The duchess might have done much if she had been as clever as she was ingenious. For a time she succeeded in bringing together many of the more moderate men of both parties, with their ladies, each willing to make concessions; but the duke insisted upon his own rights and the wish of Mathilde to confirm the betrothal of their daughter, and to make the occasion memorable and worthy of the two houses of de Louvet and de Fournier. Madame la duchesse had been compelled to accept the situation. The invitations had been issued before the insurrectionary movement might be said to have actively broken out in Paris; otherwise it is probable that even the duke himself might have admitted that the time for the betrothal, or at least the very public manner of it, was ill-chosen.

Many of his friends had been faithful to their promises to be present, and the duchess had been allowed a certain margin of license in regard to her own politically mixed circle. It was significant of the rapid march of events, however, that while several of the duke's nearest neighbours had emigrated since the notification of the reception at the Château de Louvet had been issued, only two or three of the persons who had been hopeful to see some accommodation between the king and his opponents had driven into the courtyard of the Château at the invited hour. These were not of first-class importance, and were half suspected by the duchess to be spies rather than friendly guests. It looked as if all her influence with the members of the Assembly, Girondists and Jacobins, had suddenly died out, though there were plenty of reasonable excuses

why anyone of them should have been unable to leave his duties on that eventful day, for had they not been sitting and deliberating morning, noon, and night?

While the de Louvets were receiving their guests, the king and queen, accompanied by the dauphin, had left the palace to seek protection with the National Assembly. Poor brave queen, linked with a king who found within him no impulse to respond to her heroic spirit, but only the resignation of the martyr.

"I would rather be nailed to the walls of the palace than leave it!" she had said, but nothing would move the king.

"Are you prepared, madame," said Rœderer, "to take upon yourself the responsibility of the death of the king, of yourself, of your children, and of all who are identified with you?"

No one replied. If the queen's voice had been raised in response it would have been "death rather than retreat," but she was silent; her courage was one thing, her devotion and duty to the king another.

"Let us go!" said M. Montjoye. "Honour commands it; the safety of the State requires it; let us go forthwith."

The mob robbed the queen of her purse on the way; and from first to last the entire story of the downfall of the Throne is sullied, not alone by the cruel tragedy of it, but with everything that is sordid and mean.

This was no time for Assembly men, for Jacobins or Girondists, to be visitors outside the barriers of Paris. Grébauval, much as he was personally exercised in connection with the affair at the Château de Louvet, did not venture forth until after the deputation from the new municipality had appeared at the bar demanding that their powers should be confirmed, the king dethroned, and a National Convention convoked; and it was not without difficulty that he and his military escort had made their way through the Champs-Elysées, where the massacre of the flying Swiss was active and ghouls of both sexes were already maltreating and plundering the bodies of the dead.

It is hard to conceive that within a mile or two of

these scenes of riot and slaughter there should be a sweet and quiet country, a calmly-flowing river, pleasant gardens, and homesteads in the midst of growing crops.

Both the duke and the duchess took occasion, now and then, to leave the arriving company, hoping to console Mathilde for the absence of de Fournier, which began to be alarming, the more so that several guests brought disquieting reports of new and grave troubles in Paris, stern messengers of the truth of which were already mounting for Neuilly and the well-known Château that made the view from a bend of road beyond the Lion d'Or impressive with ancient towers and fine old timber.

"He is detained on some business of the king," said the duke, kissing Mathilde ceremoniously as was his wont. "They say his majesty has at last asserted his royal authority."

"But where is his messenger?"

"Did you expect a messenger, my love?"

"Surely," said the girl, looking up pitifully into the steadfast eyes of her father, who took out his snuff-box and walked to the end of the room and back again to the window where Mathilde was standing.

"It may have been a sudden service," he remarked, as much to himself as to Mathilde. "It is possible the king has taken possession of the Assembly and placed the president under arrest—so it is whispered."

"There was the young man Ellicott, he should have come by his own impulse of devotion," she answered, all the natural bloom gone out of her cheeks and her voice trembling with emotion.

"He may be here any moment," said the duke, brushing the snuff from his embroidered vest.

"If the king is in danger or if he is in triumph," she said, "Henri is in peril, and Ellicott too, his dangerous service discovered by the agents of Grébauval. I am overwhelmed with apprehension."

"Be comforted," was all the duke could say in reply, "be comforted; I will send your mother to you."

"My mother has no comforting words for me," the girl wearily replied.

"She loves you, Mathilde. Would that her heart beat as truly in other ways. Au revoir."

The duke, in his velvet breeches and silk stockings and his powdered wig (despite the scarcity of flour and the famine price of corn), tapped his snuff-box thoughtfully, and sighed as he returned to the terrace of the principal salon of the Château, where a gaily-dressed company was eating bonbons, sipping syrups, and bandying about the latest scraps of news, the duchess in their midst apparently the merriest of them all, almost youthfully alert in her movements despite her stiff corset and high-heeled shoes.

"Go to Mathilde," said the duke in a whisper, as he passed to welcome an old friend who had driven over in state from St. Germain.

"Oh, my dear," said the duchess, flinging herself into a chair. "I am well-nigh driven mad."

"What tidings have you received then?" asked Mathilde.

"Everything—nothing—the air is full of rumours. None of my friends are here to deny or confirm them."

"And Henri?"

"Not a word about him from anyone."

"And the girl Bruyset?"

"Should have been here this morning," said the duchess; "no tidings of her, by word or writing. My dear, we are lost."

She rocked herself to and fro in her chair, and wiped her eyes, not, however, in her mental distraction forgetting to do so with due regard to her facial make-up—slight as, it is only fair to say, it was—that gave brilliancy to an otherwise dull complexion.

As her mother gave way to her feelings Mathilde repressed her own.

"Let us bear our misfortunes, whatever they may be, with patience, trusting in God," said Mathilde.

"Many who trusted in God have lost their lives," said the duchess, with an angry gesture.

"And have found their reward in heaven."

"I prefer a reward on earth," said the duchess.

"Mother!" exclaimed Mathilde, kneeling at the

duchess's feet and laying her head upon her knees. "Mother, you are in despair; what is it?"

"Oh, if you had only been advised by me," said the duchess; "even now it is not too late."

"Too late for what?" asked the girl, rising to her feet. She knew too well what her mother was about to say.

"To take the hand of Monsieur Grébauval. He loves you better than ever a legitimate de Fournier knows how to love."

"Mother!" exclaimed Mathilde.

"Marry Grébauval and you confer a favour; marry de Fournier and he honours you; marry Grébauval and you win his eternal gratitude; no de Fournier was ever true to his wife."

"Mother!" said Mathilde, her long white hands covering her ears.

"To Grébauval it would be a love-match, I'll swear it; he is as fine a figure as the other, his estate is not impoverished, he is rich in specie, too,—nay, I will speak, if it is for the last time,—rich and powerful, can protect you, can save us all from misery—great God! perhaps from the scaffold!—who knows? Think of it. Only think of it!"

"Mother, you wrong yourself and me; you wrong my father, and you wrong Henri; dear mother, don't break my heart."

"Your heart!" said the duchess, rising from the chair in which she had been rocking herself backwards and forwards to the disarrangement of her toilette. "You talk like some bourgeoise shop-girl who prefers François, the hairdresser, to Jacques, the baker. Your heart, indeed! In your station marriage is a matter of state, of family, of business, to use the most practical phrase; it is a contract between two parties who bring value on each side. Grébauval brings money, power, the good name of a statesman, the prospective authority of a ruler—who knows?"

"Oh, mother!" was still all that Mathilde could say. If she had said more probably the duchess might have said less.

"Your father is running his head into the lion's

mouth; his obstinacy—his duty to the king, he calls it—means death unless he sets out for the frontier at once; nothing will make him move; and there is only one man in Paris who can save him, who can defend our property from the wolves of the faubourg; that man is the Deputy Grébauval."

"Mother, forgive me; I cannot listen to you."

"Cannot listen to me!" said the duchess, shaking out her fan and posing in an attitude of defiance that became her well. for she was a fine woman, with a well-poised head, a figure straight as a Diana, and mobile features that responded to every emotion. "You cannot listen to me?"

"I said cannot, mother," replied Mathilde, the colour coming suddenly back into her fair face. "I will not!"

"Very well, mademoiselle," said the duchess. "Then go your own way to perdition!"

But she had no sooner uttered the unmotherly malediction than she burst into tears and flung herself into her daughter's arms, exclaiming between her sobs: "My dear, I didn't mean what I said! But, oh, my poor child, we are surely lost! What will become of us?"

A hurried knock at the doc brought back the duchess's self-possession.

She withdrew from her dau s arms, wiped her eyes, disappeared behind th n of Mathilde's boudoir for a moment, and re ady to meet the gaze of her waiting-woma ight a message from the duke.

"Will madame la duch d to return to the salon? It is monsie rébauval who has arrived, with Captain the National Guard."

"I will attend the duke immed " said the duchess, with an assumed air of perfect se possession.

"Merci, madame; I shall say so," replied the woman, retiring, but not without a curious glance at Mathilde.

"Courage, my child," said the duchess. "Courage!" kissing her on both cheeks, and taking a last survey of herself before she left the room.

CHAPTER XIV.

A TRICOLOUR SASH IN FINE COMPANY.

"THE Deputy Grébauval and Captain Marcy of the National Guard!" said Mathilde. "Captain Marcy is a new acquaintance of my mother's, I suppose. There is something she is hiding from us; she knows some dreadful news, I'm sure of it. Sweet Mother of God, protect us!"

Her eyes wandered, as she uttered this brief supplication, to a picture of Mary between two squarely-built windows that opened upon a balcony overlooking the grounds of the park and commanding a long line of country.

From the picture her eyes rested once more upon the quiet pastoral scene with its first faint suggestion of autumn.

Presently she pushed one of the windows wide open, and, shading her dark eyes with her hand, gazed intently into the distance. Then, stepping out upon the balcony, she uttered a short, happy cry, followed by an exclamation of alarm.

"Yes, it is Henri! I'm sure it is; but why from that quarter? Surely he is pursued."

She strained her eyes right and left, but no other horseman was in sight.

As he drew nearer she noted the rider's hussar uniform. The dying rays of the afternoon sun sparkled once and again on the scabbard of his sword. The crimson of his vest and the red stripes in his shako told out against the green of the landscape. Arrived at the sunk fence of the park, he slid from his saddle, and, leading his horse into the cutting, tethered it there and climbed to the lawn and ornamental gardens, with their shady shrubs, trimmed yews, and tall box hedges.

Mathilde almost held her breath as she watched him.

He took advantage of every bit of cover to conceal his approach; and she could see that his uniform was ragged, the gold and braided trappings of it torn and hanging in patches. Yes, he was pursued. His life had been in danger. There was blood upon his face. Mathilde felt all her strength suddenly departing from her. Her first impulse was to call out to him; her next was an impulse over which she had no control; she fell back upon the window-seat, and only revived some half an hour later, when the duke came for her.

Meanwhile, the guests had begun to find it difficult to maintain a becoming composure in face of the extraordinary delay of the function at which they had been summoned to assist.

The notary and his officials, with the marriage contract ready for signature, had been regaled with some of the Château's best wine; but pleasures overdone are apt to pall. The notary's chief clerk had fallen asleep over his cups. The anteroom in which they were installed was in a dark wing of the Château. Already the servants had lighted the candles, and the chief notary had confided to his grace's valet that he feared Count de Fournier had been detained by something more than military or official duties.

Similar doubts agitated the guests, who had begun to wander aimlessly about the grand salon. Some of them had found seats under the palms beneath the verandah; others might be seen talking in groups upon the terrace.

The scene was pretty enough, and might have struck a stranger as indicative of the general peace and happiness of the times.

It was a gaily-dressed company; the gentlemen in silks and velvets, rich cravats with lace ends, frilled cuffs, and silver buckled shoes, brocaded coats, embroidered vests, and swords with jewelled hilts; the ladies in shot silks, high-heeled shoes and dainty petticoats, many of them carrying gold-headed canes, as well as exquisitely-painted fans; for the elaborate fashions of Louis XV. had been adopted by the no less extravagant court of his unfortunate successor.

Here and there might have been observed the more subdued dressing adopted by the National Assembly; for there were present a few active sympathisers with the democratic aspirations of the Progressive party, which at the outset of the Revolution believed it possible "to construct a constitutional monarchy out of a corrupted noblesse, an irreligious middle class, and an ignorant people." They were not opposed to the royal authority, but desired to deprive the Throne and its Ministers of their despotic character, giving to France, in fact, a constitution similar to that of England. With Trophime Gérard, Marquis of Lally-Tollendal, they hoped to accomplish this by the simple division of the States-general into two Chambers; the nobility and clergy forming the Upper House, an arrangement which, in these present days of England, a certain section of the advanced Radical party desire to break up, with a view to governing through a single Chamber, the House of Commons. But the Liberals of France found it impossible to stem the torrent of change which they had unlocked; the flood overwhelmed them, and it was in the midst of the rising deluge that the Duke de Louvet thought it a fine thing to disregard the torrent. His wife had keener eyesight; though there was something ignoble in her efforts to provide a bit of dry ground on which they might hope to abide until the waters should subside.

Although, as we have said, there were a few notables present who showed sympathy with the aspirations of the friends of the people in the sobriety of their clothing, the arrival of Grébauval in his tricolour sash, and his friend, Captain Marcy, in his uniform of the National Guard, stood out in striking contrast to the rest of the company.

"I have not the honour of Captain Marcy's acquaintance," said the duchess; "but any friend of our very good friend, Monsieur Grébauval, is welcome to the Château de Louvet." And she thereupon presented Captain Marcy to several of the most aristocratic persons who surrounded her; and, although the duke bowed with great formality to both Grébauval and

Marcy, he was much more gracious than the duchess had expected him to be, for which she was duly grateful.

"You did not tell me that you had invited Monsieur Grébauval," said the duke aside to his wife.

"Nor had I," she answered, with a frankness that was unusual with her whenever Grébauval was in question.

"And his friend?"

"He is a stranger to me."

"What, then, may be the meaning of their presence?"

"I cannot tell."

"The count has not arrived, I fear?" said Grébauval to the duchess, as the duke passed on.

"No," she said, with an inquiring expression of countenance. "What is the news from Paris?"

"For your royalist friends, bad," said Grébauval, lowering his voice as he led her aside; "for the people, good."

"Yes?" said the duchess, repressing her anxiety.

"The victory has been dearly bought, madame; but it is a great victory for the people."

"What is good for the people, dear Monsieur Grébauval, is good for France; what is good for France is good for all."

"I hope so," said Grébauval. "But you would be wise if you dismissed your guests and postponed a ceremony which is inopportune, and, indeed, can hardly take place with one of the contracting parties absent."

"My dear monsieur, you know that were I mistress here the chief contracting party has just arrived."

"You honour me," said Grébauval, "and I am not ungrateful."

They little thought that at this moment the Count de Fournier, unperceived except by a trustworthy servant, had crept into the house.

"Take me to the duke's private chamber, Joseph," said de Fournier to the duke's sturdy retainer. "I must wash, and find some fresh apparel."

"This way, count," said Joseph, leading him by a back stair to a quiet chamber and dressing-room.

"Find an opportunity as quickly as you can to inform the duke that I am here."

"Yes, monsieur. Thank God, you have come!"

"I am pursued," said de Fournier. "Let no one but the duke know I am in the house."

"Trust me, monsieur le comte," said the servant.

"I do, old friend," said de Fournier, who at once began to take off his jacket with a view to a rapid toilette. It was a painful business to remove his upper garments. His left arm had bled considerably, and his linen adhered to the wound. His hair was clotted with the blood of a shrewd blow that had been aimed with murderous intent, resulting, however, in nothing more than a somewhat severe abrasion of the scalp. His limbs were stiff. His sword-arm ached as if it were bruised. But his muscles were as hard as iron. He was bathing his face when the duke entered the room.

"Excuse me, dear friend," said de Fournier. "I am making myself at home."

"My dear Henri," replied the duke, "you are wounded."

"A little," said the count, beginning to sponge his head.

"Let me call my man," said the duke.

"No, thank you; every man his own valet de chambre is the order of the day," said the count. "If you can find a little sticking plaster and some clean linen, I shall soon be ready to make my appearance."

"Upon my soul," said the duke, "you set me a difficult task. I am useless here without my man. But here is Joseph; he is in your secret, he will help us."

"I thought I might be of service," said Joseph, who had entered on tip-toe and fastened the door behind him.

"'MY DEAR HENRI,' SAID THE DUKE, 'YOU ARE WOUNDED.'"

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CHAPTER XV.

"IN THE NAME OF THE LAW!"

THE arrival of the Deputy Grébauval instead of the Count de Fournier, the evident anxiety of the duchess, a hurried message which presently took the duke away, sudden rumours that a troop of the National Guard was stationed within the gates of the Château gardens, and a remark made by Captain Marcy to a well-known trimmer that the king was a prisoner and the Tuileries in the hands of the people, created considerable uneasiness among the guests bidden to the espousal of Mathilde de Louvet with Henri Lavelle, Count de Fournier.

A few men, more timid than the rest, had ordered their horses. Others, recognising the possibility of trouble, had sought advice in as secret a way as possible from leaders and friends of the party or order to which they belonged. A group of well-known royalists had been interrupted in council by Grébauval and Marcy while chatting together upon the terrace, and several ladies had been warned by their less venturesome lords to make ready for their departure.

In the midst of the general uneasiness the duke entered the chief salon, leading in his daughter, with the count by her side, no longer in his uniform, but dressed in the style of the Court of Louis XV., a costume which the duke had worn at the coronation of his unfortunate successor.

A general murmur of surprise and satisfaction greeted them. The duchess, at the moment, was speaking with the Deputy Grébauval. They both turned to see the guests gathering round the lovers and the duke, while at the same moment the notary and his clerks were making their formal entry, the master of the ceremonies craving room for monsieur the notary.

An alcove in the salon, hitherto concealed by a por-

tière, was uncovered, showing a table and writing materials, at which the notary and his officials took their seats.

"I present to you, my dear friends and neighbours," said the duke, "my daughter, Mathilde Henriette Hortense de Louvet, the contract of whose espousal with Henri Lavelle, Count de Fournier, you honour us by being present to witness."

Vivas and shouts of "long life and happiness" greeted this announcement.

"There has been an unfortunate delay in our proceedings," continued the duke, "but the duchess and I both heartily invite you to assist us in condoning this breach of punctuality at supper; and permit me further to remark that those of our honoured guests who do not accept our poor hospitality for the night will find sufficient escort with flambeaux provided by our master of the horse."

The duke had once upon a time rejoiced in a magnificent establishment, which had been administered in a right regal fashion; but on this occasion it was a trifle grandiloquent and misleading to talk of the master of the horse, who was no more than his chief stableman, his horses consisting of fewer than half-a-dozen, but such arrangements as he had been able to make for attendance upon those who might require torch-bearers or guides were on a fairly liberal scale. The ceremony of betrothal should have taken place before sunset, though it was expected that some of the guests would remain over their wine until late. Many were staying in the house; others had come long distances; a few from residences in the suburbs of Paris, which were in those days practically in the country, cut off to a great extent from the immediate news of the capital.

Hardly had the duke finished speaking and the cheers of his guests subsided when voices in altercation were heard at the entrance to the salon; and before his grace could turn to inquire the cause of it, the commissary of police, in his scarf, attended by his company of gendarmes under command of the officer who had interrogated Pierre Grappin, forced their way into the

room, the commissary uttering his shibboleth, "In the name of the law!"

Almost at the same moment the ladies were put aside, and the gentlemen, with few exceptions, drew their rapiers. Grébauval and his friend, Captain Marcy, remained apparently unmoved.

"Henri Lavelle, otherwise Count de Fournier, I arrest you, by order——"

The rest of the commissary's words were inaudible, a group of young bloods surrounding the count with shouts of protest and resistance.

The duchess and most of the other ladies retired to the further end of the room, attended by several unarmed guests endeavouring to assure them that nothing serious was about to happen.

"Messieurs," said the duke, with Mathilde on his arm, a pale but firm and dignified spectatress of the scene, "I crave your pardon, monsieur le commissaire, this lady is about to sign a marriage contract with the gentleman you claim the right to arrest. Pray let the ceremony proceed, and then we will discuss your uninvited presence at the Château de Louvet."

The commissary glanced at Grébauval, who turned away.

"Monsieur le député is surely not concerned in this?" said the duke, who had noticed the glance of inquiry which Grébauval had avoided.

"Except to regret it," said Grébauval, promptly. "But the law is the law."

"And persecution is persecution," said the duke.

"It shall be so," exclaimed the Vicomte Languedoc, stepping forward. "Let the ceremony proceed, monsieur le duc."

"Yes, yes!" shouted twenty voices, as twenty swords were raised aloft and twenty men ranged themselves in front of the duke and his daughter; all the time Count de Fournier standing calmly by, but wary and watchful, his attention mostly fixed on Grébauval.

"Monsieur le capitaine," said the commissary, turning to the commander of the gendarmes, "do your duty!"

"Fix bayonets!" said the captain, and the ring of the grounded arms rung along the marble floor.

"Messieurs!" exclaimed the Deputy Grébauval, "let me be mediator between you. If it be possible, out of respect to the occasion, monsieur le commissaire, let the citizen duke have his way. The ceremony first, the arrest afterwards."

"The ceremony!" shouted the duke's partisans, "and no arrest!"

"Forward!" commanded the captain of the gendarmes; and thereupon Captain Marcy drew his sword.

"For God's sake!" shouted Grébauval, flinging himself between the soldiers and the excited royalists, "let it be as the master of the house wishes."

"Nay, by God, it shall be so!" exclaimed the Vicomte Languedoc. "Messieurs, on guard!"

"Let me beseech you!" said Mathilde, releasing herself from her father's arm and placing herself in front of the vicomte. "This is a peaceful house, loyal to the nation. Do not you, monsieur le vicomte, defy the law. And you, Monsieur Grébauval, you have the power, order the withdrawal of these gentlemen who have outraged the peace of a private house."

"Let me join my prayer to that," said the duchess, coming forward.

"Pardon me," said the count, speaking for the first time, "I will accept no favour at the hands of Monsieur Grébauval. My dear, permit me," he concluded, turning to Mathilde and taking her hand, he led her to her mother, and the group of royalists now stood together, a compact body of gallant fellows ready for battle.

"Nay, then, messieurs," said Grébauval, now assuming the full authority he had possessed from the first, "we will have consideration for mademoiselle and the ladies. Gallantry is as compatible with liberty as with tyranny. With your permission, monsieur le commissaire, the law this time shall not deign to use its strength, but will bide its time. You will set an example of forbearance, messieurs," he went on, addressing the commissary and his officers, "that shall be an

example of sobriety and mercy to these rash gentlemen of the noblesse. Messieurs and mesdames, let the ceremony proceed. Monsieur le capitaine, you will have the grace to retire, our good friend, the commissary, desires it."

Both were creatures of Grébauval, and they retired accordingly; and the duke's friends making an archway of steel for the count and Mathilde to pass under, they advanced to the table of the notary and signed the marriage contract.

"An espousal is not a marriage," said Grébauval to himself, "and even if it were, the bridegroom shall sleep at the Conciergerie."

"And now, messieurs," said the commissary, who had remained a silent witness of the reading of the contract and the signing and sealing thereof, "I claim the peaceful surrender of Henri Lavelle, otherwise the Count de Fournier."

"Otherwise be damned!" said the Vicomte Languedoc. "A rescue, messieurs, a rescue!"

"I will have no blood shed in this house on my account," exclaimed de Fournier. "I and monsieur the Deputy Grébauval have met in this place once before. His was the victory then. His must be the victory now. There will be a third time when fate may be just."

A shout of protest greeted the count's decision; but Mathilde, in a soft voice, said, "Henri, my love, you are right. Much misery must come of a contest here, and the deaths of many friends; but let me go with you."

"I surrender my sword," said the count.

"And I myself to accompany him," said Mathilde.

"That may not be," replied the commissary.

"You shall not part us," cried Mathilde, clinging to the count.

The company stood by in doubt and sorrow, some having sheathed their swords, others still clutching their weapons threateningly.

"Put up your swords, messieurs, until a fairer opportunity offers for their use."

"Let me see the commissary's authority for your arrest," demanded the vicomte.

The commissary presented it. The vicomte handed it to the count.

"It is in order," said the count. "Messieurs, it is well that we obey the law."

At a later period the count and his friends would have been more chary. Within four-and-twenty hours such an arrest would have meant death. But as yet the guillotine had not begun to devour the best and the bravest sons of France.

"Why is the house shadowed by a troop of the National Guard?" asked the vicomte.

"It is an honourable escort of the Deputy Grébauval," Captain Marcy replied, "and was deemed necessary also for the citizen's safety on a day when the mercenaries of Louis have fired upon the people, but it is not concerned with the duty of monsieur the commissary of police."

"Let the escort be withdrawn," said Grébauval.

"When this assembly, which has threatened the majesty of the law, withdraw to their homes," said Captain Marcy.

"Messieurs," said the duke, "it were well we submit, and lay our complaint before the Assembly."

"Be sure the Government will do you justice, monsieur le duc," said Grébauval, who from the first had feared the result of an encounter between his small force and the duke's company; "and I will second your appeal with all my heart."

"Enough," said the duke. "But I pray you escort me to the same lodging with my friend. I am equally criminal in being a king's man and wishing well to France. Moreover, with the consent of my friend, Henri, I would have fought you to the death ere he should have surrendered."

"It may not be," said the commissary. "You will, no doubt, be accommodated, all in good time."

The surrender of the count and the willingness of the duke to accompany him had completed the depression of the belligerent guests.

"At the same time, monsieur le commissaire," said Grébauval, "we may not prevent the citizen duke and his daughter from going to Paris, if it is their will," inspired by a wicked thought of making Mathilde prisoner also, and at La Force, not at the Conciergerie with de Fournier.

"Citizen duke!" repeated Vicomte Languedoc, with a sneer, though Grébauval thought the combined title a clever concession to both sides.

"We will go to Paris," said the duke.

"I do not desire it," said the count. "It would be poor courtesy to leave your friends."

"If it is the duke's pleasure, he and his daughter shall journey to Paris under the separate escort of Captain Marcy; and I will make it my duty to give you such a written passport as may render their movements convenient."

"Is Paris so overcome that passports are necessary to honest travellers and men who have served the State in the Senate and the field?" said the duke.

"There is much commotion in Paris," said Grébauval, "but it has only honour and respect for the house of de Louvet."

"Joseph," said the duke, addressing his valet, who had been a careful observer of the scene, "order our coach. We go to Paris to-night; you will accompany us."

Joseph left the room, but returned almost immediately.

"Nay, dear," said Mathilde to the count, "do not deny me."

"Why will you go?"

"That at least I may know where you are," she said, her lips trembling with emotion.

"We only change the Château for our hotel in Paris," said the duke, "and our word may be useful to you. The President of the Assembly knows how much I have done for France."

"Alas, he knows what I, too, have done for her this day!" said the count.

"Let it be as my father wishes," whispered Mathilde.

"As you will," replied the count. "At least we shall be near the king and queen when they may need us."

The duchess had several times spoken aside to Grébauval, and had evidently been reassured by his replies to her questions.

"It shall then devolve upon me to complete the sadly interrupted duties we owe to our friends who have honoured our hospitable intentions," she said.

"You will not need the escort of Captain Marcy," said the count to the duke.

"Assuredly not; we will travel in your company—by your leave, monsieur le commissaire."

"But you shall have my passport, in case of need," said Grébauval, going to the notary's table, and writing a few lines which he handed to the duke; and almost at the same moment he slipped into the commissary's hand a still briefer note, the three words of which the suspicious and wily Joseph deciphered. "Detain them, nevertheless," was the traitorous message, or surely Joseph was dreaming.

Half an hour later the guests, some of them supperless, others fortified by copious draughts of wine, began to disperse, and the commissary of police and his guard were on their way to Paris with their prisoner. De Fournier rode one of the duke's horses, between two mounted gendarmes. Three of the company were an advance guard, carrying flambeaux, for the night had come down with a darkness that was but little redeemed by the new moon. A cumbersome family carriage, containing the duke and Mathilde, brought up the rear.

But Joseph had disappeared.

"He will have the honour to await monsieur le duc at the Lion d'Or," said the postillion, as he mounted for the journey.

"The varlet!" said the duke.

"That was the message he bade me deliver, with his profound respect," said the postillion.

CHAPTER XVI.

"A RESCUE, MESSIEURS!"

MONSIEUR BERTIN and his friends had not recovered from their amazement and alarm at the revelations of the Swiss soldier who could speak French, when Pierre was mysteriously called from the room by Jean. It was to receive Joseph, the duke's valet.

"You see, Master Pierre," he said, "I dressed the count, and while he made his toilet he told me what had been done in Paris. Monsieur Grébauval I have known since I was a lad. He hates the count. The duke hates Monsieur Grébauval. Mademoiselle is of the same opinion. Madame la duchesse fears him. A sergeant of the National Guard posted at the gates of the Château was at the same school with me. He said nearly every nobleman with the king had been betrayed and killed. I never doubted that our dear count was wrong not to let monsieur le vicomte Languedoc and his illustrious company fight for his liberty and the honour of the name. It was mademoiselle who influenced him. Ladies are naturally timid. But he is going to his death, depend upon it. They will butcher him in the streets. The sergeant as good as said so. 'Detain them, nevertheless,' was written on the paper Grébauval gave to the commissary. I am ahead of them. Rodolphe and Léon, the postilions, will throw the horses down, so that mademoiselle and the duke may be compelled to remain at the Lion d'Or, if you agree. I have run on for your advice."

"Joseph, you confirm all my fears," said Pierre. "Come into the house. A brave company of the count's friends and the duke's are within."

Taking Joseph by the arm, he hurried him into the house.

"Messieurs," he said, "this is monsieur le duc's confidential servant. The count is on the road a prisoner.

Following him are the duke and mademoiselle. They are betrayed. The Deputy Grébauval gives them a false passport. The commissary is his creature. He has his secret orders to detain them on their arrival in Paris. The count's friends, with the Vicomte Languedoc, would have resisted the arrest, but were over-persuaded by mademoiselle and the duke, who relies upon the justice of the Government and the protection of the king. His majesty, as monsieur the Swiss Guard tells us, retreated to the Hôtel de Ville. If the king is a prisoner, will they spare the duke? Will they spare mademoiselle? If it was a crime to defend the king, for which his majesty's troops and his majesty's personal friends have been sacrificed, what is monsieur the count to expect?"

"Death!" said Monsieur de la Galetierre. "Messieurs, our mission to St. Germain is too late. Our place is either in Paris or on the frontier."

"We must keep our rendezvous at St. Germain. Our friends will await us there; it is of the gravest importance that we do not disappoint them. If we could take the duke and the count with us, they would strengthen our council."

"A rescue, messieurs!" exclaimed the elder Delauny, "a rescue!" at which those who had not already risen to their feet got up with a clatter of swords and spurs.

"'What becomes of the noblesse if they do not stand by their order?' is what monsieur le vicomte himself said, messieurs,'" remarked Joseph.

"Again my father's last words," said the younger Delauny. "A rescue, messieurs!"

All eyes turned to Monsieur Bertin.

"It is a serious step," he said.

"Far more serious if we allow the martyrdom of this unhappy day to be swollen with blood we need; far more serious to fling that sweet creature, the betrothed of our friend Henri, into the brutal arms of the treacherous Grébauval," said Galetierre.

"Yes, yes!" shouted every voice save that of Monsieur Bertin.

"A rescue!" shouted Delauny, and "Vive le Roi!"

Galetierre and the Swiss soldier, who was burning with a desire to avenge his massacred countrymen or die in the attempt.

"Then be it so, messieurs," said Monsieur Bertin. "To horse!"

"Delauny aîné for our captain," said Monsieur Guillebert.

"Agreed!" came the hearty response; and the young officer of dragoons led the way to the stables.

In a few minutes they were mounted and in the road. The night had grown lighter. The crescent moon shone like a jewel with a few scattered diamonds here and there.

"At the bend of the road, by the forest," said Pierre, "would be a good station for action."

"Lead on, then," said the captain. "If we fight, let each man mark down his quarry."

"We shall attack on foot," said the Swiss soldier, giving instructions to his comrades in their native language.

They had barely halted in the shadow of the wood when the lights of the flambeaux of the gendarmerie came in sight.

"The count, disarmed, is between two soldiers," said Joseph, who had run by the side of the elder Delauny, whose brother, the sous-lieutenant, whispered, "Thanks, messieurs, for your torches; we shall see your villainous faces the better."

"Bid them stand, Delauny; and demand their prisoners. If they deliver them, well; if not, we must take them."

"Right," said Delauny. "And you, Joseph, look to your master, and tell the postillion to drive like mad for the bridge, and thence to St. Germain."

By this time the gendarmes and their prisoner had entered the bend of the road, where the rescuing party was posted.

"Monsieur Bertin, my brother, and you, Monsieur de la Galetierre, will advance with me; the rest await the word of command—it will be, 'A rescue!'"

On came the troop of gendarmes, and forward went the four royalists.

"Stand, messieurs!" said Delauny aîné, reining up his horse against the flambeaux, which suddenly seemed to dance. "We demand the release of your prisoner."

"Who are you?" shouted the captain of the guard, riding up.

"Loyal gentlemen of France," said Delauny.

"Then respect the law," said the commissary, pulling up his steed by the side of the officer.

"When you set us the example," replied Delauny.

"We are its officers," said the captain.

"And we its defenders. Release monsieur the Count de Fournier."

"Comrades," said the captain, drawing his sword, "prepare for action!"

There was a sudden clatter of accoutrements.

"Messieurs," shouted de Fournier, "stay your hands."

"De Fournier, you are betrayed," replied Delauny; "you are going to your death. The commissary has Grébauval's orders to imprison the duke and mademoiselle."

"It is a lie!" said the commissary.

"It is the truth, dear monsieur le comte," said the voice of Joseph, as if from the earth. "It is written; the commissary has the paper!"

"We waste time," said Delauny.

"We do," said the captain, who had brought his company into line. "Present! Fire!"

The order was sudden, but the volley was not delivered before "A rescue!" brought the reserve on the scene pell-mell; and the intentionally murderous volley —clumsily fired, the "Ready!" not being given—missed its aim, with the exception of tearing a cap here and there, and slightly wounding Delauny, which only gave an added fury to his onslaught.

In a moment Bertin and Galetierre were in the thick of the fighting, and the Swiss, with a wild cry, rushed upon the enemy, dragging the captain from his horse and butchering him as he fell. Delauny, with a shout of "Vive le Roi!" went full tilt upon the commissary and unhorsed him with a blow that cut him down

through the shoulder. One of the gendarmes guarding de Fournier fired his pistols at the prisoner, who was down with the shock before the fight may be said to have fairly begun; but only one charge had struck him, the bullet hitting him obliquely and wasting itself upon his hat—a marvellous escape, which argued favourably for the activity of his guardian angel.

He was no sooner down than Pierre picked him up.

"No, not hurt," he said, "only stunned; give me your arm."

"And here's the beggar's sword," said Pierre, helping the count to remount, and dragging forth the sword of the gendarme, whom he had felled with the butt-end of his pistol.

"Back to the Château!" screamed the sergeant of the gendarmes, galloping from the field. "Help from the National Guard!" and away went the unhorsed half of the defeated troop.

"The duke and Mathilde?" said de Fournier.

"Here, monsieur le comte," said Joseph.

They were both in the road, the maid remaining huddled up in a corner of the carriage, her head hidden among the cushions.

"Henri!" exclaimed Mathilde.

The count leaped from his saddle. "My dearest, back into your carriage."

"And back to the Château," said the duke.

"Oh, no, monsieur," said Joseph. "You are ordered to La Force, or the Abbaye, or the Conciergerie, God knows!"

"Monsieur le duc's carriage forward for the rendezvous. Joseph knows the way. Postillions, a pocketful of crowns for your best speed."

The words acted like magic. The duke was hustled into the carriage, and Mathilde by his side.

"Away for St. Germain," whispered Joseph to the postillions, who, putting spurs into their horses, quickly had the family chariot fairly leaping on its way, and went pell-mell along the high-road, speedily passing the Lion d'Or, Joseph in the boot, de Fournier and Monsieur

Bertin galloping one as advance, the other as rear guard.

"Now, messieurs," said Delauny, "are we all on muster? All mounted?"

"Except the Swiss."

"Any wounded?"

"One killed," said Pierre, "the Swiss; five of the enemy."

"Damn the enemy!" said Delauny. "Any of ours who cannot travel?"

"None," said his brother; "a cut or two, none so bad that we cannot be our own surgeons."

"Very well. Mount the two Swiss."

One of the king's old guard took the captain's horse; the other bestrode that of the commissary, who lay gasping out his life in the blood of his military companion.

"Muster complete, messieurs?" asked Delauny.

"Only short of the dead Swiss."

"Place him before one of his comrades; we will give him honourable burial."

Jean, who had proved his loyalty and his valour to the satisfaction of his master, assisted Pierre to lift the dead body in front of the Swiss who rode the captain's horse.

"Ready, messieurs?"

"Ready all!" shouted his brother.

"Forward, then, for the rendezvous; and ride like the devil!"

CHAPTER XVII.

IN A DUNGEON OF THE CONCIERGERIE.

It is hard to say where man or woman might be safest in these early days of the August sacrifices to the new-born liberty of the people. For the moment, Jaffray Ellicott was probably better off in a dungeon of the Conciergerie than on the road to Neuilly. Marie

Bruyset was at least unmolested in her garret; while there were women among the corpses of the Paris streets.

A startling feature of the Revolution was the rapidity with which one lurid incident succeeded another. It was only on the 10th of this first month of the autumn of 1792 that the Count de Fournier, in his brand new uniform of the reorganised battalion of hussars, stood by the side of his king, confident in the royal power. Only an hour or two later he fought shoulder to shoulder in a forlorn hope of defeat with a remnant of the Swiss Guard. Not long after the clocks had striven to make the hour of noon heard amidst the universal din, he was one of the few royalist noblemen, who had drawn their swords for the king and queen, left alive to seek shelter where charity might befriend misfortune. Before the night was over, as we have seen, he had entered a world of fresh adventures, to be eventually rescued in a hand-to-hand combat of gallant friends, who had snatched him from the clutches of his bitterest foe.

During that same eventful day, Jaffray Ellicott had passed through the blood and fire of the Tuileries, the new song of the uprisen people in his ears,—"Aux armes! Marchons!"—the dead and dying in his path, to exchange a refuge, that was paradise, for a dungeon that might have been anteroom to the pit of Tophet, so beset was it with gloom of the present and gruesome memories of the past.

For the moment the prison of the Conciergerie was not overcrowded, but it had made a beginning at the outset of the Revolution that was worthy of its previous history.

It was here that the initial forces of the army of bandits and assassins were let loose upon the doomed city. From the riotous opening of the gates of La Force sped the enfranchised prisoners to the Conciergerie, where five hundred mutinous felons were set at liberty to enlarge the cry for blood and inaugurate the chaos of the Commune, which we have seen partially revived in our own time, its worst terrors, however,

only being a faint reflection of the days of Marat, Danton, Robespierre, and Grébauval.

In this narrative of the lives and deaths of the men and women whom we select episodically for illustration from this phantasmagoria of heroism and devilry, we are as yet only in the second day of our history. Long before dawn the blazing timbers of the Lion d'Or testified to the vengeance which Captain Marcy, with the approval of the Deputy Grébauval, had taken upon Pierre Grappin, whose association with the rescue of the Count de Fournier was easily established. The dead and dying had been removed, the bodies of the commissary of police and his colleagues of the gendarmerie being paraded through the torch-lit streets of Paris with an aggravating solemnity, the reputed victims of an aristocratic conspiracy.

Before the ghouls had done turning over the butchered Swiss and their comrades in the gardens of the Tuileries and the Champs-Elysées, where some of the last of them had been intercepted in their flight, all the persons connected with the rescue of the Count de Fournier were proclaimed outlaws and assassins.

The energy of the Department of Justice was tremendous. Poor Jean of the Lion d'Or had confessed to their names under an agonising torture in one of the dungeons of the Conciergerie, where, after confession extracted with red-hot pincers, he was left to the rats and the turgid waters of the Seine. Jean had sacrificed himself in an effort to save some of Pierre Grappin's property when he thought the house had been entirely abandoned. He had been captured by a couple of gendarmes, who had remained in concealment near the spot. Pierre, disfigured for life by the volley which Marcy's party had fired into the windows of the inn, had crawled to his sister's cottage in the valley of the Château.

During the day, the triumphant municipality ordered the immediate destruction of the emblems of royalty. An army of workmen, aided by sans-culottes and patriots of every degree, attacked the statues of Henri IV., Louis XIV., and XV. These and other public memorials

were pulled down amidst execrations and the shouting of Republican hymns. One Guingerlot, second in command of the gendarmerie à cheval, interposing a word of regret at the destruction of so fine a work of art as the statue of Louis XV., was immediately struck down by twenty pikes and pierced to death.

With the fall of the colossal figure of Louis XIV., in the Place Vendôme, two persons were killed; the first a virago hawker of Marat's paper, and the second Simon the printer, who was only a spectator. While Marie Bruyset's soul shuddered at the stories of bloodshed that were retailed in the Rue Barnabé, she found no special claim upon her sympathies in the fall of Simon, through whose instrumentality Ellicott had been taken, her power to help the de Louvets considerably diminished, and her own life placed in jeopardy.

One of the first duties of the Assembly, on the overthrow of the king, was to provide for the legal administration of affairs As if in competition of the overmastering authority of the municipality, they actually, among other appointments, made Danton Minister of Public Justice. Moved by his threatening harangues and the action of the primary assemblies, whose decrees he quoted, the Assembly suppressed the *juges de paix*, who had been faithful to the constitution, and filled their places with the fiercest democrats. These and other measures, and the decrees of the municipalities which suspended the whole committees of sections and the directory council of the Department of the Seine, literally placed Paris in the hands of the Jacobin party. Danton and Robespierre became the mouthpieces of the municipality, which overawed the Assembly with its sanguinary demands; and the Deputy Grébauval was not only appointed a judge, but, as the powers of Robespierre, Danton, and St. Just increased, so likewise did he become an individual influence, the weightier in this narrative because of the greater secrecy of his action. He was hand-and-glove with Robespierre—a position of some delicacy, seeing that it excited the jealousy of Danton and set up a rivalry with St. Just by no means agreeable to that ardent fanatic.

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For the convenient exercise of his functions, Grébauval took up his abode in an old hôtel in a back street behind the Palais de Justice. It was an historic house, had formerly been a monastery, and was hemmed in by a number of comparatively poor streets, most of them long since swept away, hardly anything remaining in our time to do more than vaguely identify the locality. One of the things that make the history of the Revolution seem more like a Dantesque vision of darkness than a record of truth is the fact that nearly all its landmarks have disappeared. With all her natural art instincts, Paris lacks the devotion necessary to preserve either her beautiful memorials of the past or the architectural and other relics of her victories or her defeats. Of all the prisons belonging to that tragic period, not one remains except the Conciergerie; and, apart from the sentiment of the antiquary and the historian, it might be well to close it against the wondering eyes of both Frenchmen and strangers, who are permitted to stand in the cell of Marie Antoinette and realise, if their imagination can touch such low depths of inhumanity, the patient martyrdom of that unfortunate queen.

From the moment that Jaffray Ellicott found himself within four cold, narrow walls of the Conciergerie, he had demanded to be taken to the Deputy Grébauval. Fortunately he heard none of the agonising cries of poor Jean in an adjacent dungeon. The walls of the ancient fortress were well fitted to their purpose of defence and offence, and in adding to the building, St. Louis had maintained the sombre spirit of the founders. Although Louis XVI., on coming to the throne, abolished torture and other miseries of the Conciergerie, the Revolution, with the cry of "Liberty, equality, fraternity" on its lips, not only revived the secret and bloody horrors of the Middle Ages, but outdid them in private and in public. Poor Jean was one of the first victims of the revival of the cruelties of the oubliettes beneath the Bombec Tower, which bristled with sword-blades, and were infested by loathsome reptiles.

Jaffray was not altogether ill-supplied with comforts, considering his position. He had a bed of straw and a rug, besides a chair and table; these latter luxuries being added by the gaoler, who was not yet quite hardened in his office. Moreover, Jaffray spoke with an air of fascinating frankness. "I am no royalist," he repeated, as if he were still talking to Marie Bruyset; "I am the protégé of monsieur the deputy Grébauval, his secretary; I was with General Lafayette in America; I am a child of the great revolution against the king of England, the subject of a free people. Take me to monsieur the deputy, and he will confirm my declaration."

"So you say," remarked Laroche, who was seated on the wooden chair, while Jaffray reclined upon his bed, for it was early morning and Laroche had just left the private bureau of Grébauval, who had given him charge of the operations against de Fournier and his friends.

"It is true, and you know it."

"How do I know it?"

"You have seen me in the deputy's bureau?"

"I have seen many persons in the deputy's bureau."

"I beg your pardon, Monsieur Laroche, you have not. Monsieur le député is mostly alone when he speaks with such as you."

"Such as I?" said Laroche.

"Such as you," said Jaffray. "You are a detective, a secret agent of Monsieur Robespierre; I know your service well enough."

"Indeed! And, unfortunately for you, Monsieur l'Anglais, I know yours."

"I find no scorn in being called English, though I am American, monsieur."

"You were in the Tuileries Gardens yesterday?"

"I was."

"You followed the fortunes of one man in the fighting?"

"You mean that I took an interest in the Count de Fournier. It is true."

"Why in the Citizen Fournier more than in any other person?"

"That I will explain to the Deputy Grébauval."

"You took no part in the patriotic defence of liberty yesterday?"

"I tried to defend my own liberty; but not very successfully, or I should not be here."

"If you are with the people, and true to the service of Monsieur Grébauval, why did you fly before a band of patriots."

"Because the fools mistook me for a royalist."

"You aided in the escape of a Swiss guard, who found refuge in a street behind the church of St. Roch?"

"It is false,' said Jaffray. "Take me to Monsieur Grébauval, I will answer him; I have no business with you; moreover, it makes my heart ache to think that so sweet and beautiful a girl as Marie Bruyset can have so hard and cruel a father."

"It will not serve you to take advantage of your short acquaintance with Marie Bruyset," said Laroche, the faintest flush of colour relieving the customary pallor of his hard face, which at moments was, however, redeemed by a certain reflective, almost pathetic, expression in his dark deep-set eyes.

"Oh yes, it will, Monsieur Laroche; it will serve me as a dear memory all my days; it would even rob the scaffold of its terrors."

Jaffray arose as he said this, and paced his narrow cell; and Laroche turned to observe him watchfully, not in fear of a second assault, but with a roused curiosity.

"I am only a young fellow, Citizen Laroche. I have seen so much of bloodshed, witnessed from childhood so much that is terrible, that I don't think I fear to die or care very much to live; if I care more to live to-day than I did yesterday, it is because I have seen and conversed with your daughter. You smile; you think that will make me an easier instrument in your hands, or a more necessary victim. No, it won't; you can't rob me of my independence, any more than you can imprison or destroy my immortal soul."

"Oh, you are a religious fanatic, eh?" said Laroche.

"No; but I believe in a hereafter; you don't, of

course. The murderous ruffians who massacre the defenceless, the aged, and the young, and curse God, they have no souls to be saved; but they have souls to be damned, as they will find before long."

"What became of your friend, the *ci-devant* count?"

"I don't know; it will surprise me to hear that he is alive."

"He gave you a message to the Château de Louvet?"

"It is false," said Jaffray, shielding his conscience by a mental reservation. "His message was to Mademoiselle Mathilde."

"You have been in his service some time?"

"I have never been in his service," said Jaffray; nor had he, except in a friendly way and out of gratitude.

"You are lying to me," said Laroche.

"If you would give me leave to reply to that aspersion as a free man, I would knock you down, Monsieur Laroche."

"You remind me of the liberty you took in that way not a long time since," said Laroche. "No other man has done me that despite and has lived to boast of it; but I am a patient man, and you were in peril."

"Why, there is a touch of the nobility of your daughter in that observation," said Jaffray. "And yet I cannot but wonder that you should be her father!"

"You are reckless, citizen," said Laroche, striking his stick upon the pavement as a signal to the gaoler; "but every man is free to talk himself to the gallows, if he chooses."

"That is so," said Jaffray, as the bolts were drawn and the gaoler entered.

"Merci, monsieur," said Laroche to the official. "The prisoner may have pen and ink and paper, if he so desire; but when he needs a messenger I will be at his service; permit him no other."

The next moment Jaffray was once more alone with his thoughts, and they were chiefly in Marie Bruyset's garret in the Rue Barnabé. The fate of the Count de Fournier cast a shadow upon the sunshine of his meeting with Marie; but he was young, and love is selfish

and all-absorbing. It was love at first sight with Jaffray, and he had stirred Marie's unpledged heart with strange and unusual sensations.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"LOVE LAUGHS AT LOCKSMITHS."

It seemed like so many months that Jaffray ate his heart out in the dungeon of the Conciergerie, instead of a matter of days. They gave him pens and ink and paper, but he wrote no letters. Laroche came no more. The gaoler rarely spoke to him. Old in experience, the prisoner was still too young to live upon reflections. He had no patience for meditation. More than once he had thought of falling upon his gaoler, and making a dash for freedom. Then he remembered that the officer had been kind to him. On several occasions he had brought him extra rations, once or twice luxuries; "gifts," he had remarked, and that was all. Who could have taken the trouble to send him gifts? Was it possible that Marie Bruyset had discovered his enforced retreat? It would be possible, no doubt, for her to exercise a certain influence in his favour. Laroche loved the girl in his queer way. Jaffray had discovered that much in the detective's favour.

One day the gaoler bade him prepare for a visitor. "Make your toilette, monsieur," he said; "it is a lady who has permission to have audience with you."

"A lady!" said Jaffray.

"Young, and not ill-looking," said the gaoler, straightening the rug on Jaffray's bed and brushing away the crumbs that strewed his table.

Jaffray buttoned his long drab coat and readjusted his neckerchief. His heart beat furiously. There could be no other lady in the world who would be likely to visit him except her whose image was continually in his mind.

"'MADEMOISELLE WILL CONVEY NO LETTER FROM THE PRISON,' SAID THE JAILOR, AS HE CLOSED THE DOOR."

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

"Mademoiselle will convey no letter from the prison," said the gaoler, as he closed the door upon Jaffray and his visitor. "I trust the citoyenne and Monsieur l'Anglais."

"My God, it is you!" exclaimed Jaffray, almost bursting into tears as she allowed him to fold her in his arms.

There was eloquence in the silence that followed. Neither of the two young people spoke for several minutes. Then Jaffray released his preserver of the 10th of August, and put her from him at arm's length.

"Let me look at you," he said, "my angel, my good fairy, my love!"

Marie was deeply agitated. She had not counted upon so ardent a reception, but her heart responded to it. She had thought of Jaffray every moment since they parted; thought of him, intrigued for him, and confessed to herself, and on her knees before the Virgin, that she loved him, that her life only needed the gift of his love in return to make it complete, to compensate her for whatever ills she had endured, for whatever ills might come.

"Oh, my friend!" was all she could say, blushing as he gazed upon her.

"And oh, my love!" said Jaffray. "Has God been so good that He has brought me here to establish our love? A rescue, and I might never have seen you again; or if I had, your own heart might not have been touched to sympathy and pity."

"I loved you from the first touch of your hand," she said.

"Roughly laid upon your mouth—and thus I kiss the affront away," he said.

It must be admitted that Jaffray was a bold wooer. When she loves in return, a woman is pleased with this kind of audacity. Marie Bruyset had learned to love Jaffray in his absence, had dwelt upon every word that was a confession of his interest in her; had treasured every incident of their romantic meeting; had painted a miniature of him from memory, which she hung about her neck night and day; and with her alternate ap-

peals and threats, her purring and the opposite, she had succeeded in not only obtaining an interview with the prisoner, but had drawn from Laroche a piece of information which would make her visit especially welcome to Jaffray, even if he had thought no more of her, if he had had no real love for her in his heart, if his tender words had only been contributions of the current coins of simple courtesy and gratitude for useful service.

To love is to doubt and fear; and Marie entered the shadow of the Conciergerie oppressed with womanly trepidation, and yet elated with joy at the prospect of meeting the fugitive again.

"My father gave me a permit to see you," said Marie, after a time.

"God bless him!" said Jaffray.

"He has left Paris this morning on a journey."

"May he have safe conduct and a happy return!" said Jaffray, who gave no thought to what he was saying, for Marie's hand lay in his and his arm was round her waist.

"If his journey bodes no harm to our dear friends beyond Neuilly," she said, lowering her voice.

"Have you news of the count?" Jaffray asked. "He lives?"

"Yes, but is proscribed; broke his arrest; he and others attacked the gendarmes, killed several—a commissary of police and a commander of gendarmes."

"No! Is that so? Well done, my brave count!"

"I fear it is not well done; but we will talk of you and your prospects. I may only stay a few minutes longer; I promised the warder to be ready when he signalled me."

"My darling!" said Jaffray, pressing her hand to his lips.

"You are to be sent for by monsieur le juge Grébauval."

"Judge!"

"Yes," said Marie, "and much besides. They say he is the soul of Robespierre—you know that he is his great friend—and Robespierre and Danton are masters

of Paris. The king and queen are prisoners. The enemy has crossed the frontier. Any day the Austrians may march upon us and cut all our throats, if there are any left among us to cut—my father's words to me, but he exaggerates, no doubt. The bloodshed has been awful in Paris, but at present the cloak of Monsieur Grébauval is able enough to protect his friends, and his arm long enough to strike his enemies; so beware, Jaffray. I do not say this altogether of myself; but my father loves me and I have been his suppliant for days; and this morning we parted—it might be for weeks, he said, and he might not live through the business that took him away. So he was almost gentle with his unhappy daughter; and what he said to me was, so far as he knows it, the truth. You will be questioned by Grébauval. If you can satisfy him, you will be reinstated. Yesterday he received some important English despatches; they need translating, and he has had good examples of your work in that way, and is still inclined to believe in your good faith and honesty. 'Tell him,' said my father, 'to take warning by what has happened; he need not tell the citizen deputy all the truth, the citizen deputy only knows half of it; let Monsieur l'Anglais be wary, and if he please he may confess to having only seen the Citizen Fournier yesterday; Monsieur l'Anglais told me how he saw him for the first time since he was in America on the day the Bastille fell; that I have not divulged, nor need he; I am willing to see him back again in the citizen deputy's bureau; let him be diplomatic, and he will get there.'"

Within an hour Jaffray was conducted from his cell through devious ways, across the general courtyard, past the Holy Chapel, through the hall that had already come to be known by the name of the Girondists, up a flight of stairs, and along other passages, dimly lighted, and across an enclosed short bridge into the house of the deputy and judge, Citizen Grébauval. This communication with the Palais de Justice and the Conciergerie had been only recently constructed. Jaffray knew the anteroom of the bureau well enough, and the smaller apartment beyond, where he had been previously en-

gaged in a secretarial capacity, the protégé and confidant of the man who was now to probe his sincerity.

With the warnings of Laroche in his mind, emphasised by Marie, Jaffray strung his faculties up to the liveliest tension. At a moment when prevarication might aid him as much as truth, where a well-directed lie might save him in a court which only valued truth so long as it served the purpose of rebellion and persecution, Jaffray resolved, if possible, to be equal to either fortune, and to answer awkward questions with mental reservations that might condone judicious lying.

He was ushered into Grébauval's private room. He knew it well, with its two panelled doors that opened with secret springs, and when closed left no trace of hinge or opening, of lock or key; a wide, large, panelled room, with an uncarpeted floor, that had once been highly polished, but was now dim and scratched with footmarks. It contained only a few articles of furniture; a cabinet, a couch, a map of France, and a table with a raised desk in the centre, covered with papers. The room was lighted by a large window, opening upon a balcony that overlooked a narrow street of gabled houses, old inns, humble shops, and a couple of ancient hotels with courtyards, a picturesque bit of Paris that was old even then.

"It is not clever to get behind the bolts of the Conciergerie," said Grébauval, looking up from his desk, and taking in his prisoner at a glance.

"No, monsieur, it is stupid," said Jaffray.

Grébauval finished a letter he was writing, and then looked up again.

"What is your explanation?"

"A mistake of an over-excited populace."

"You are in sympathy with the royalist faction?" said Grébauval, folding his letter, and turning from his desk to open a panel of the wainscot, through which he passed it with some instructions.

"With one of them, personally; not with his opinions, monsieur le député."

"It is the same," said Grébauval, leaning back in his chair, and confronting Jaffray with his penetrating

eyes; and Jaffray observed how much paler and thinner the clean-cut face was than heretofore, though it was only some ten days since they had parted, the day before the insurrection of the 10th.

"I think not, with due submission," said Jaffray, inspired at the moment with an idea that might work for good or ill. "It was on the 10th; for a moment I thought you were on horseback, and in the uniform of the new hussars"

"Have a care," said Grébauval.

"It is not the first time I have thought you might have been the gallant officer who saved my life; and until that day I had not seen him since. It was he who snatched me from death in the Cherry Valley massacre; you knew of it, monsieur. Can you blame me that he interested me? You might hardly blame me if, for a moment thinking he was you, I should follow him with solicitude. When I learnt it was the officer who was with General Lafayette in America, then I knew my deliverer; and is it in human nature for me to be ungrateful to him?"

Grébauval watched the young fellow closely, and Jaffray played his part to perfection.

"You aided the escape of a Swiss guard?"

"No, monsieur, I did not. I was in the press, and for a moment it seemed as if the crowd mistook me; my coat was torn, as you see; my vest is red, the colour maddened them and they set upon me."

"You were going to Neuilly, eh?"

"To Neuilly, monsieur?" said Jaffray. "What should I do at Neuilly? I was coming here."

"Indeed!"

"I had been absent since the morning."

"Not the only day upon which you had been absent."

"Only by your leave, monsieur, and when you, too, were absent."

"You have an apologist in the Citizen Laroche. He is above suspicion and above reproach, the soul of fidelity, and is good enough to say you have only been indiscreet. I am willing to take that view; I take you back to my confidence."

"Oh, thank you, monsieur le député," said Jaffray, advancing as if he would kiss the newly-appointed judge's hand, but with no such intention. "I hope to be worthy of your kindness."

"Not my kindness, my confidence," said Grébauval. "And now a word of warning. Never forget that your fidelity has been in doubt."

"But——" said Jaffray.

"That your fidelity to the Revolution has been suspected," continued Grébauval, not heeding the interruption, "and that another lapse from—let us call it by the mildest word—discretion, and your life is forfeit. In the dungeons of the Conciergerie, they tell me, there are even worse punishments than death."

A hard, cold expression came into Grébauval's eyes, his lips were compressed, and his broad, strong chin seemed to gather a malignant wrinkle beneath his mouth, as he rose to his feet. Jaffray shuddered.

"I shall remember," said the young fellow, with a smothered sigh.

"Here are some despatches from England," said Grébauval. "You will find your desk unoccupied in the next room; let me have the translations at once. In future, you will be lodged here; the citizen concierge will show you the room appointed for you. When you go abroad on your own affairs, you will write upon the tablets by your door where you are to be found."

"Yes, monsieur; thank you, monsieur."

"You will be true to your service?"

"I will, monsieur."

"And to the present rulers of France?"

"I will, monsieur."

"On your oath as a gentleman."

"I thank you for that word, monsieur. On my oath."

"I wipe out yesterday," said Grébauval. "Every man is master of his own future."

With that, he touched the panel-spring of the door that led into the next room, and Jaffray went to his desk.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FAMILY CHARIOT ARRIVES AT ST. GERMAIN.

THE family chariot, with its attendant horsemen, dashed along at break-neck pace towards St. Germain. Once they lost the road, and came back to it with strained axles. The toll-man, at the bridge over the Seine, by Neuilly, wondered at the flying cavalcade. The duke grumbled, and presently slept. Mathilde watched the shadows of the roadway, a glimmer of the new moon shining here and there between the trees. She responded with a beating heart to de Fournier's cheery words, as he reined up his horse at intervals to speak with her through the carriage window.

Monsieur Bertin and the Delaunys rode abreast now and then to discuss their probable action at St. Germain. Joseph sat calmly in the boot, and chuckled now and then over the fighting by the Lion d'Or, and speculated upon the safety of Pierre, who, with Jean, elected to remain behind, Pierre bleeding from a bullet-wound in the face, which Jean had roughly bound up with the linen scarf from his neck.

De Fournier was not in riding costume. When he left the Château the thoughtful Joseph had gently insisted upon endowing him with one of his master's cloaks. This modified his incongruous attire, which had not been improved by changing his elegant buckled shoes for the boots he had taken oft on his arrival at the Château from the massacre at the Tuileries. But de Fournier had no thought of dress. A good sword now swung by his side, and Mathilde was companion of his flight. This was both a joy and a pain, though to his knowledge affairs had not advanced so far on the road to that utter chaos that would endanger the life of the least protected of women, and the lowest Frenchman was supposed to be considerate, even if not gallant, to a petticoat.

Once more crossing the Seine unchecked and unopposed, they arrived at Monsieur Bertin's house on the borders of the forest, an ancient mansion of the sixteenth century, surrounded with a turreted wall, and approached across a drawbridge spanning a moat that had long been dry and given over to shrubs and flowering plants. Here they were received by a posse of stablemen and servants, and within the house by Madame Bertin and her two daughters, who provided Mathilde with an apartment near their own, and later joined the supper party in the spacious salle à manger. It was long after midnight, and Monsieur Bertin and his friends had been expected since nine o'clock. Several guests who had come from different quarters—one from Lyons and another from Dijon—sat down to sup; but it was not until after the ladies had retired that Monsieur Bertin explained the cause of his delay, and the reason for the addition of monsieur le duc de Louvet and the Count de Fournier to their council. The duke, however, begged to be excused from taking part in their deliberations, and retired to rest attended by the faithful Joseph, who sat up late to gather what information he might from monsieur le comte, for Joseph felt assured that the game of royalty and those who supported it was over, unless some extraordinary success was won by the advancing enemy on the frontier, and he was sufficiently a Frenchman to desire the success of the national arms whatever might befall. The information vouchsafed to him by his friend of the National Guard, at the Château, supplementing the count's experiences, related to him while he was dressing him in his master's fine old court costume of the previous reign, had forecast to him a far more serious future than either the Louvets or de Fournier was willing to deem possible, though madame la duchesse was filled with the wildest alarms. It was close on morning when de Fournier retired. Joseph awaited him. He told Monsieur Bertin's man that it was monsieur le comte's wish that he should do so.

"Ah, Joseph, this is good of you," said de Fournier.

"It is a pleasure, monsieur le comte," said Joseph, lighting the candles in the spacious wainscotted chamber, where he had already set the logs burning on the hearth, though the weather was still warm.

"And a fire, too!" said de Fournier, flinging himself into the ample easy-chair by the hearth.

"It is companionable, monsieur," said Joseph, beginning to remove the count's boots.

"The duke has long been abed, eh?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"He would not join our council."

"Monsieur le duc said he was tired, and wished to be up betimes."

"That must we all be, Joseph."

"If it is permissible, monsieur le comte, might I enquire what your programme is for to-morrow?"

"It is quite permissible, Joseph; but the details are not quite settled. Touching Mademoiselle Mathilde, Monsieur and Madame Bertin have a plan, which Monsieur Bertin tells me the duke endorses, should it prove agreeable to the parties most concerned. If the friendly proposal is what I suspect, the parties most concerned are quite likely to approve, and with pleasure. But sufficient for the day, Joseph, is the peppering our friends gave those rascally gendarmes and their cut-throat officers."

"It was a brave encounter," said Joseph. "But it had fared ill with us if the commander of the troop had not been in so great a hurry with his treacherous 'Present! Fire!'"

"I was right sorry for that poor devil of a Swiss who fell; what has become of the other two, Joseph?"

"Monsieur Bertin has been most thoughtful," said Joseph. "Already their uniforms have been removed, and will make fuel for the hop-kiln in the morning; Monsieur Bertin's butler has them in charge to transform them into field labourers. I hope Pierre Grappin is safe."

"Poor Pierre! he was badly mauled. I make no doubt he would find shelter at the cottage of his sister down in the valley by the Château, a hut which in its

seclusion might be a hundred miles from Paris, outside roads and footpaths."

"And yourself, monsieur le comte; how do you propose to maintain your freedom? Every man engaged in the rescue of last night, noble or simple, will henceforth hold his life in his hands, be assured."

"You think so?"

"I am sure, monsieur; as sure as fate, within the next twenty-four hours it will be a crime to be noble, and penal to shelter the noblesse from arrest. How much more shall it be fatal to one who has been championed in his escape from the newly-formed Convention, and from the councillors of the Hôtel de Ville—championed, monsieur, and released, with slaughter of the officers of the Government, civil and military?"

"Joseph, you speak like an orator."

"Nay, monsieur le comte, I speak what I know. I keep my ears open. I see with my eyes. I have spoken with the men of the National Guard. Monsieur should put on a disguise."

"What, become a field labourer, with our Swiss allies?" said de Fournier, laughing.

"No, monsieur; there are other disguises. And it is not wise that the duke should return to the Château; and surely mademoiselle should remain under the protection of Monsieur Bertin, though even this place will not always be safe—Monsieur Bertin will have to answer for last night's work."

"Joseph, your kind heart magnifies our dangers."

"Not so, monsieur," said Joseph. "Bethink you of what I have said. And at what hour shall I come to you in the morning?"

"Why, it is morning already, Joseph."

"Five o'clock, monsieur le comte."

"At eight, Joseph; I shall sleep the moment my head touches the pillow." And he did so, worn out with physical and mental fatigue.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DUKE IS OBSTINATE—AND BRAVE.

MONSIEUR BERTIN'S house was unusually busy the next day, after the unexpected arrival of the guests from the Château de Louvet. The news went round with the early morning rolls and coffee that the déjeuner would be what in England we should call a wedding breakfast. It was resolved, with general consent, that Mathilde and de Fournier should be married. The Bertins, as long as there was any record thereof, had maintained a chaplain in the house. The altar of his little chapel, in the north wing of the old mansion, was never without a choice display of flowers; and on this morning of a sudden and impressive ceremony, exotics from the glass-houses and wild flowers from the fields and woods had a combined share in its decoration.

Given away by her father, blessed by the Church, and leaning upon the arm of her husband, Mathilde, Countess de Fournier, sat down to breakfast with as good and loyal a company as ever toasted bride and bridegroom—a company that afterwards gave themselves over to their affairs with the valour and precautions of men whose devotion to the Throne of France had jeopardised their lives and estates. The flight of Lafayette from the army and the advance of the enemy towards Verdun had given an unhappy inutility to the meeting at St. Germain. It was seen that the promise of relief from without, if not quickly redeemed with success, must tend to the overthrow of the royal family. The news from the Château, and the ill-advised action of Monsieur Bertin and his friends—for so Monsieur Bertin's other guests regarded it—created a division of opinion among them. It cut off, as all admitted, any possibility of negotiation with Marat, Danton, or any other of the patriots with whom an accommodation might otherwise have been arranged.

Incorruptible as Robespierre undoubtedly was touching a possible bribe of money, he was believed to be susceptible to the flattery of overtures from the king, and he had aspirations for the hand of the daughter of the Duc d'Orléans. But for anyone known to have been associated with the attack on the escort of de Fournier all doors to the rulers of the Convention or the chiefs of the Hôtel de Ville were closed. So it was resolved that each man should seek his own safety or risk his own neck in his own way. While the bride was dressing for a journey to the scene of her honeymoon, several of Monsieur Bertin's guests started for the coast, hoping to reach England. The two Delaunys made their dispositions for joining the patriots of La Vendée. M. de la Galetierre and Monsieur Bertin remained at St. Germain, trusting, in case of need, to the hiding-places of the old mansion and to other retreats. M. de la Galetierre had a wife in St. Germain, only newly married and she was in no condition to travel, supposing their departure from St. Germain, where they had taken up their abode on the family estate of the de la Galetierres had been thought wise or desirable.

After joyfully witnessing the marriage of his daughter and the gallant young Count de Fournier, and being present at their private departure by way of a rarely used exit from the grounds of the Bertin mansion for a safe and sweet retreat beyond the forest of St. Germain, the Duke de Louvet insisted upon returning to the Château.

"It is most unwise," said Monsieur Bertin.

"Let us beg of you to remain," urged madame, "we will send our own carriage for madame la duchesse."

"I regret to deny myself the pleasure you would give us, madame," said the duke. "At some future day it would be a delight to accept your hospitality. Believe me, I am more than grateful for the generous consideration you have shown to our daughter. Madame, I have no words to thank you."

"The pleasure is ours, monsieur le duc; it would be enhanced if we could induce you to remain."

"Thank you, Madame Bertin, with all my heart; but

it may not be. I will say adieu once more; commend me to your lovely daughters. Adieu, madame."

Madame Bertin, with a nod from her husband, saw that the duke desired a parting word with Monsieur Bertin. Offering her hand to the duke she retired, and, with her daughters, took a seat at an upper window overlooking the road, where they might wave a last parting recognition of the brave old nobleman.

"I had no hand in your escapade, my dear Monsieur Bertin," argued the duke against the further protest of his host.

"But that will not save you," Monsieur Bertin replied.

"Life is uncertain anyway," said the duke; "and the marriage of Mathilde with our dear Henri is a happiness that will make amends to me for any considerable inconvenience."

"Inconvenience, my dear friend!" said Monsieur Bertin. "You take a cheerful view of a most desperate situation."

"Is it a desperate situation?" said the duke. "I think I have come through worse straits. Besides, would you have a nobleman desert his wife as if he were of the sans-culottes? No, messieurs; I am for the Château de Louvet. See to the carriage, Joseph."

As Joseph went to the stables, both Monsieur Bertin and M. de la Galetierre suggested that Joseph had taken a hand in the affair on the Neuilly road, nor would the postillions be held altogether innocent of the bloodshed.

"Would you ask them to let their master go home alone? Then do so, and see what they will say. Not a man of them who would not lay down his life for me. No, no, messieurs, their hands are guiltless; for whatever they may have done has been done under orders. We go to the Château."

"You will find it, if not in charge of Captain Marcy, at least under surveillance," said M. de la Galetierre.

"All the more should the master be at his post."

In the end they had to give way, and the old family chariot of the de Louvets set out with its postillions in

their well-worn saddles, and Joseph in his familiar seat, the duke the only passenger.

They watched the carriage drive out of St. Germain with forebodings of ill. A little group of villagers looked on with some mutterings of stifled derision and some of open admiration; for the poison of revolt was in the air, and the pinch of short commons, dear bread, and stint of means was generally credited to the riotous living of the rich.

The postillions, by their own notion, kept clear of the high road whenever they could. Near the ruins of the Lion d'Or they were stopped by a mounted company of the National Guard.

"I am returning to my house," said the duke, in answer to the demands of the officer commanding.

"Monsieur will permit my men to accompany him."

"On what grounds?" asked the duke.

"In fulfilment of orders," said the officer.

"By all means obey your orders," said the duke. "Yours is an honourable escort. It would ill become one who has worn his country's uniform in active service to reject it."

It was, therefore, with an armed guard that the duke continued his journey. His naturally high spirits were somewhat damped at sight of the ruins of the Lion d'Or, though it in no wise weakened his resolution nor shook the determination he had expressed at St. Germain.

Arrived at the Château, he found a sentinel at his gates, and as he entered the house he encountered the Deputy Grébauval.

"You have honoured my house in my absence, Monsieur Grébauval. Permit me to express my regret that I was not at home to receive you."

"In your absence you have been well represented, monsieur," said Grébauval. "Madame is a woman of judgment and discretion. When favours are sued for, a petticoat has the advantage of her sex."

"Madame la duchesse makes friends where I should not look for them, monsieur le député. I am glad to know that in this she is discreet."

"You may thank madame," said Grébauval, "that you may still rest here. At the same time I require your parole as a gentleman that you remain within the Château's boundaries. To this extent madame's influence saves you from harder lodgings."

"Madame la duchesse shall explain to me," said the duke.

"Your daughter, monsieur?" said Grébauval.

"Will return. It was not her intention, any more than mine, to quit the Château, except for my hôtel in Paris."

"Of that the chief of police is well aware; otherwise she would have been included in the warrants of arrest of Monsieur Bertin's marauding party for crimes as atrocious as they were unwise."

"Crime seems to be epidemic just now, from all I hear," said the duke; "but you only do us justice in absolving myself and family from the general madness. The Count de Fournier was innocent of any intention to escape. He bowed to the law, and relinquished his sword. Monsieur Bertin was hurried into hostilities, and——"

"Monsieur de Fournier rode off with the assassins who shot down the faithful servants of the nation, and released their legally arrested prisoner," said Grébauval impatiently, interrupting the duke.

"It is true; I may not deny it; but he will return in good time, I make no doubt."

"He must return at once; his good time may not be the good time of the Convention."

"I am not his keeper," said the duke.

"There is no more to be said, monsieur," replied Grébauval, beckoning a soldier who held his horse at some distance down the drive to the Château. "I have your word that should the Convention desire your presence in Paris you will be found at the Château?"

"I shall always honour the call of France."

"The Convention is France, monsieur."

"Then I shall obey the Convention. Adieu, monsieur le député."

"Au revoir," replied the deputy, with a formal re-

sponse to the duke's ceremonious salute; "au revoir."

The duke found his wife in a state of great agitation.

"Georges," she said, as he entered her boudoir, "Oh Georges, tout est perdu! But oh, I am glad you have returned."

"Thank you, my dear," said the duke.

Such a tender passage as this had not passed between them for years. The duke actually conducted his wife to a seat, and kissed her.

"I met the deputy at the door," he said.

"He is our saviour, Georges—our saviour!"

"You are distressed, I am pained," said the duke.

"And Mathilde, where is she?"

"At St. Germain, under the protection of Monsieur Bertin."

"A sorry protection! He is proscribed; he is charged with murder. And the count?"

"With Mathilde, also under the protection of Monsieur Bertin."

It occurred to the duke that it might be well not at present to mention the marriage at which he had been so joyful a witness.

"He too, alas, our unhappy Henri," said the duchess. "He is proscribed also; if he is taken he will go to La Force or the Conciergerie. My dear Georges, the prisons are crowded with our misguided friends Oh, where will it all end?"

"Be calm, my dear, be calm; we should have no cause to fear. Henri will not dishonour his name; and our child's future is in the hands of God, without whose will, we are told, not even a sparrow is allowed to fall."

"Which sounds like a cynicism," said the duchess, "rather than the words of Scripture."

"We are prisoners in our own house," said the duke. "Is that so? The gentleman in the sash seemed to intimate that you would explain, and he complimented me on having so wise and discreet a wife."

"Georges, if ever you loved me—and once you did——"

"And do now, believe me," replied the duke, gallantly kissing her limp hand.

"Then do not anger monsieur le député Grébauval, who is also a judge——"

"In Israel?" said the duke, smiling.

"For God's sake, do not mock; for us he is France, for us he is life and death. If not for yourself, have mercy upon me, upon Mathilde. What has happened in Paris is nothing to what is to come; and there is no escape—the barriers are closed, no one is allowed to leave without a pass, and not a single member of any noble family may obtain one without an influence that if suspected would be at the risk of even an ordinary citizen's life. Oh Georges, you say you did love me once, and there is the sweet binding link of our child—our only child—for her sake, then, if not for mine, curb your tongue, let discretion temper your courage, I pray you on my knees," and she sank at his feet in a passion of sobs.

"Nay, then, my dear, I give you my word it grieves me to think you should deem it necessary to kneel; rise," and he bent over her with something like tender emotion: and as she rose to her feet all distraught, her eyes filled with tears, he embraced her, with the added words of comfort, "My dear heart, I place myself under your orders; can I say more?"

"No, dear, no; thank you, a thousand times thank you."

The duke had never seen his wife so deeply moved.

"And now, madame la gouvernante, I have had a long ride. I would desire some refreshment. I will go to my room, and await your orders."

He took her hand, kissed it ceremoniously, went to his own room, and rang for Joseph, without whom he could not make the simplest toilette; so he thought then, but he had yet much to learn.

Beyond this scene there is nothing more to report of the incident of the duke's return. The days went by with feverish notes of rumour and a stolid surveillance of the Château.

CHAPTER XXI.

UNDER RED PINIONS.

THE Cupid that presided over the loves of Mathilde de Louvet and Henri, Count de Fournier, and of Jaffray Ellicott and Marie Bruyset, was the Asmodeo of Le Sage rather than the winged infant of Ovid.

In deference to the worship of classical and mythological deities under the chiefs of the French Revolution, the God of Love assumed as many shapes as the ancients gave him.

Entering into the spirit of the mad fancies of the time, one might imagine Paris as having sworn allegiance to the son of Nox and Erebus, not to the ingenious offspring of Jupiter and Venus. He was mostly a malignant spirit that held sway when Gardes Françaises and Gardes Nationales, dames des halles and triumphant sans-culottes raged and drummed, and spiked the guns of abolished royalty.

And yet he was not all malice, not all Asmodeo, not all devilish, this demon of mythical power. Once in a way he put on the wings of purity and breathed the breath of love into the most forlorn lives that were beating against the bars of La Force, the Abbaye, and the Conciergerie. Now and then, his white pinions stained with the blood of poor persecuted humanity, he assisted heaven's own angels to rob assassination of its terrors.

But the fiendish god had special license in the days of Marat and Robespierre. It was under his bat-like wings, his Mephistophelian impulse, that the great tragedy of Paris marched on from scene to scene, with passing influences of higher deities; but upon every pinion of god or goddess, mythical, poetic, or religious, there were gouts of blood. Faith, hope, charity, liberty, every idealisation of virtue and patriotism, every image of love, honour, and beauty that appeal to the imagina-

tion or stir the nobler passions, were dyed in the blood of a great people. Here and there virtue and love were spared the proof of martyrdom. Here and there battle and murder, famine, lust, torture of body and soul, were stayed by the barrier of a divine providence or an accident of fate, behind which there still reigned domestic peace and uninterrupted social life, but not without attendant shadows, for everywhere within the boundaries of the belated city was heard the tocsin, everywhere the signal gun, everywhere the new song of the Marseillaise, everywhere strange cries, and the drumbeat of civil war. Beyond the gates and barriers, away in country villages, and in distant cities, there came from the frontiers alarms of advancing foes; met by sanguinary messages from the Revolutionary Tribunal, inciting provincial cities to insurrectionary risings that soon rivalled the terrors of Paris.

There were, however, glints of sunlight between the shadows, intervals of country that were spared the worst crimes of the Revolution, stray villages that escaped the ravages of war. And even in Paris there were humble garrets and out-of-the-way abodes where a certain close imitation of quiet and repose and happiness held almost uninterrupted sway. Jaffray Ellicott's tablets gave the home of Madame Laroche, in the Rue Barnabé, as his most habitual retreat during the hours when his services were not required in the office of his patron and employer. Madame was a patient drudge, as we know; an industrious unimaginative Frenchwoman, who spent her time between the market and her kitchen, and who cared not who occupied the Palace of the Tuileries so long as she had money enough to keep her suite of rooms going and Laroche was in a reasonably good temper.

Jaffray had taken the hint of Marie Bruyset, madame's stepdaughter, to make friends with Laroche's "grass-widow," for Laroche had not been heard of since he took his leave of Marie. No word, no sign of him, either in the Rue Barnabé or at his official rendezvous in the anteroom or office of the Deputy Grébauval.

The young Anglo-American spent much more time

in the garret of Marie Bruyset than in the rooms of Madame Laroche; and Marie had, moreover, become quite friendly with her. Originally, as we know, Marie had taken her father's second marriage as an offence, and it hurt her to see how much better he treated her step-mother than he had treated his first wife, Marie's devoted and miserable mother. But Marie was young, and youth is easily consoled. Madame encouraged Jaffray's visits, and neither blamed nor praised, nor noticed, indeed, how frequently a short visit to her meant a long one to Marie, in the little miniature painter's garret.

Marie and Jaffray often sat for the hour together, late and early, talking of everything under the sun, Jaffray's childhood and Marie's artistic ambition, Jaffray's father and mother, and Marie's hopes and fears for the de Louvets. The tocsin boomed, the drums beat, but Marie drew the blinds and lighted her lamp, and love made for them a selfish sensuous music of its own, none the less sweet for the harsh sounds without, none the less delightful for the occasional impulse of fear that came and went with the dallying hours.

Moreover, every parting was an adieu; for who could say when they might meet again? So every parting was a lovers' farewell, the tender caresses of which were worth every peril short of death itself.

The interval of comparative inaction that followed the double escape of Jaffray Ellicott and the Count de Fournier was marked by varied turns of fortune's wheel for and against the persons in whom we are most interested. Simon the printer, who began the work of mischief in the Rue Barnabé, had ignominiously dropped out of the running. Poor Jean, whose loyalty had been more than half suspected, had lost his life through his devotion to the man who had doubted him. It may possibly be that Jean's lot was the best. His troubles were over. Many a man and woman had cause to envy him within a brief day or two. Pierre Grappin was ruined, but he had the consolation of a stroke of vengeance upon the pompous commissary of police and his

arrogant officer, and the enlargement of the liberty of his friend, the count, besides hopes of something further in those directions when he should have recovered his health and strength. He was a ruined man, it was true; but he was already on the way to poverty before the fire, and the Lion d'Or was not his property though its contents belonged to him, and he much regretted the loss of his stock of wines, some of which were of famous vintages. His sister, more than anything, deplored Pierre's wounds, one of which would assuredly change his appearance almost beyond the recognition of his friends. Pierre was something of an optimist, and the seeds of religion, sown in his heart when he was a lad, blossomed now into comforting helps to his patience. He reminded his sister that there were worse disfigurements among the men who had resisted the friendly claims of Monsieur Bertin and the brave Delaunys, and that, furthermore, some of them were dead and buried; and, after all, if his face was disfigured, his heart remained whole, and it might still please God to make his arm strong for France and de Fournier. Neither of them mentioned Madame Grappin after Pierre's description of the revolt, though Pierre continued to think of her in regretful reminiscences of the days of their courtship.

For the time being, perhaps de Fournier and Mathilde were the happiest of our little company. Within four-and-twenty hours of their arrival at St. Germain they were launched into the bliss of an unexpected honeymoon. Monsieur Bertin conducted them to a country house in an out-of-the-way corner of an estate between St. Germain and Lisieux, a small farm, far from the main road, in the valley of a tiny stream that made its way through woods and forest and meadow lands to the Seine. It was a quaint old cottage, mostly built of wood, with thick timbered floors that exhaled the scent of pine and beeswax. An old man and his wife, and one servant, a farm-hand, were the only occupants. They had been placed there by a philanthropic relative of Monsieur Bertin, to whom they were devoted. Their farm consisted of a few acres, which they cultivated

themselves, the produce going chiefly to Monsieur Bertin's residence at St. Germain.

At the time of year which an eccentric fate had selected for the honeymoon of de Fournier and Mathilde, the Hermitage, as the farm was called, was at its best. The little orchard was laden with fruit. A small patch of wheat was heavy with golden grain. In the adjacent wood and about the natural hedges, and on the slopes of the banks of the stream that ran by the meadow, where a couple of cows chewed the cud in calm content, many kinds of flowers grew. The wild scabious, the white and pink convolvuli, and the blue campanula were common. A cluster of fading summer blossoms still enriched the honeysuckle bush that spread its branches over the cottage porch, and there were roses in a tangle of red and white among the lavender and old-fashioned herbs that fringed the kitchen garden with its beet and potatoes, its parsnips and vegetable marrows, its celery and beans—some of the latter in flower, others thick with seed-pods for the coming spring. There was just a touch of sadness in the reddening berries here and there, and in the brown and yellow leaves that gave artistic colour to the woods. The robin's note, down by the old summer or tool-house, was in plaintive competition with the tinkling of the brook as it ran over a little artificial weir, which the farmer had made for a pool, that supplied fresh fish for the honeymoon table.

What a gracious time it was! Monsieur Bertin and the duke conspired to lift the shadows of the Revolution from the temporary home of the occupants of the Hermitage. Monsieur Bertin sent scraps of news by a trusty messenger, and visited the farm himself. Joseph had corrupted his friend, the National Guard—not with gold or rations of wine and meat, but with reminiscences of their boyish days—to the extent of being, on occasion, wilfully blind and deaf, and permitting Joseph, in a queer disguise, to pass out of the Château grounds unchallenged. Joseph, whenever he desired to ride, managed to have a smart little cob saddled and ready, at a certain habitation embowered with trees and out

of the way of traffic. He carried messages between the Château and the Hermitage that excused de Fournier for remaining in his pleasant hiding-place. The days went by one by one, with soft dreamy autumn evenings and mornings of tranquil calm. The little patch of wheat was cut and bound in sheaves, the roses began to scatter their red and white petals upon the garden path, the sun set earlier every day, autumn brooded over the forest, and, with sadder notes of news that began to make discord in its harmony, the honeymoon began to wane. Mathilde feared for her father's life and her mother's already limited liberty.

On a false scent, Laroche had followed the Delaunys, to hark back again to the neighbourhood of St. Germain, where he had succeeded in surprising M. de la Galetierre, who had been added to the list of prisoners in the Conciergerie. Monsieur Bertin's house was under strict surveillance. Every nook and corner had been searched, madame and her daughters interrogated and threatened. Joseph had been able to convey this painful intelligence to the count, and with it news from Paris that fulfilled the worst forecasts of the Duchess de Louvet. A battalion of the National Guard, with a municipal officer at its head, under the authority of the Revolutionary Tribunal, had made domiciliary visits in a circuit of six leagues in and around Paris; and the new machine, henceforth to be known as the guillotine, had practised upon its first political victim, D'Anglermont, his crime being that he was an agent of the Court. Laporte came next, and the third martyr to duty was the Baron Bachmont, commandant of the Swiss Guard, by whose side de Fournier had made his last stand amidst the butchery of the Tuileries.

"It is not possible that you can remain in this place," said Joseph to the count, when Mathilde had left them alone for a few minutes on this last day of his hazardous visit.

"What do you advise, Joseph?" asked de Fournier.

"If monsieur le comte will feel it no dishonour to put on the disguise I have brought from Monsieur Bertin's, and madame la comtesse will condescend to make such

change in her attire as the woman of the Hermitage may assist la comtesse to arrange, then we shall ride through the forest to Evreux, where Monsieur Bertin makes no doubt the widow Stainton will receive you. I have brought a valise with the attire of a merchant, for monsieur le comte, and I have two good horses besides the grey mare I rode from the Château, the horses provided by Monsieur Bertin's groom."

"You advise this?"

"It is Monsieur Bertin's advice, and I approve it, monsieur, entirely."

"And when do we set forth?"

"At once, monsieur."

"Very well, Joseph, come then and let us see our masquerading costume. And you, my friend, what will you wear?"

"I make no change, monsieur le comte. I attend you with discretion to be of your company, monsieur, or not, as occasion may require. I have a written permit that assigns me a commission of importance by order of the Commune," said Joseph, a smile hovering for a moment over his serious face.

It was already nine o'clock when the bride and bridegroom had donned their bourgeois habits and announced themselves as ready to start. Mathilde looked none the less attractive in her old-fashioned woollen cloak and hood, and her curious tall hat. The count wore his mouse-coloured long frock-coat and his embroidered waistcoat, his three-cornered hat, and his top-boots with an air that did not make the new clothes very much of a disguise.

There was a moon, clouded over now and then. De Fournier went to the door. The silence was profound.

"Bring your horses, Joseph."

"They are at the gate, monsieur."

"I forget whether you said you had seen Monsieur Bertin, or only had his instructions second-hand."

"I did not see monsieur, but madame expressed his wishes. There are many servants in the mansion, and it is difficult to know whom one may trust. Madame only trusts herself."

"And you, Joseph?"

"Oh, yes, certainly," Joseph replied, "I am privileged."

"I will go and see if madame is ready," said the count. "The light has gone from her chamber. I hope we may relight it, Joseph, in this same old house. It is not necessary to live in a palace to be happy, Joseph."

"I hope not, monsieur," Joseph replied.

An hour later the honeymoon had waned to entire eclipse. From the Hermitage, with a smouldering fire that made a flickering light on the parlour windows, bride and bridegroom passed out into the night.

CHAPTER XXII.

UNDER THE STARS.

THERE was a purple sky, upon which the stars shone like gems. Unhappily, they were not as propitious as they were beautiful. Once in a way one of them would flash into space, type of many a human life predestined to suffer eclipse within a few short days. The night was sweet and still, made for love. The trees whispered in the perfumed air. Mathilde rode by her husband's side. She could hardly realise the significance of their impromptu excursion. Joseph cantered on ahead.

De Fournier felt strangely in his bourgeois gear. It helped to give novelty to the situation. He looked none the less picturesque in his ample coat, his three-cornered hat, and his brocaded vest. Mathilde had combined her own attire with some ancient costumes of the farmer's wife, a richly-lined light cloak that was an heirloom, handed down by her grandmother, a hood of brown velvet that became the young bride's rare complexion.

The narrow way from the Hermitage wound along

towards the main road through the forest, with fields on one side and woods on the other.

"We are Citoyenne and Citoyen Duval, by Monsieur Bertin's orders, Joseph tells me," said de Fournier, in a tone of mirthfulness, after a gallop over the half a league of road that brought them well into the forest. "You have changed your name, dear, already; to me it is a new sensation."

"It is like having a sweet secret, to be so disguised in name and dress," said Mathilde, with an effort at cheerfulness.

"Another act in the gracious comedy of our honeymoon, Mathilde, and this excursion a gallant masquerade," said de Fournier, "with a kindly starlight night specially provided by Nature's own stage manager."

"You give life and hope, and make things bright that otherwise might be too sad for words," said Mathilde.

"Why, my love, we shall never be happier—two ardent lovers in the first days of their honeymoon. It seems a very paradise, yonder Hermitage; so humble, yet so full of pastoral dignity. When France is once more in repose we'll visit the farmer and his wife again, and hold high festival in commemoration of our bridal home."

All that was gentle in de Fournier's character made itself manifest under the influence of his young wife.

Hitherto there had always been a certain tone of the grand seigneur in his wooing, a dash of the soldier, a something of the romance that belongs to lace and feathers and high estate. Now, with a touch of adversity and in close communion with the woman of his heart, de Fournier had discovered in himself a new world of thought and feeling. He had, furthermore, disclosed to Mathilde a new manner and a naturalness of demeanour, that, making her still more fond, also increased her fears of the shadow under which they had found a sunshine of their own.

"When France is in repose again!" she said, with a sigh. "You say that with a heart-ache."

"I feel no heart-ache so long as you are by my side.

To ride under the stars out into the wide world, man and wife, is fulfilment of all my best dreams."

"We awaken from our dreams, dear," said Mathilde, vainly struggling against her apprehensions. "Pray God this happy fulfilment of both our loves come to no melancholy ending!"

"All life has its conclusion; let us not think of what's to come, except to try and avoid what's ill."

"But if they take us, these men who may be even now upon our track? My heart stands still at thought of it."

Mathilde stretched forth her hand to him. He laid hold upon her bridle and stooped to kiss her.

"They shall not take us," he answered quickly, his hand morally on his sword, but the next moment falling by his side, with the qualifying remark, "if God and the Virgin defend us."

"But if it be God's will to give us up?" she said, with a sigh.

"Why then, dear heart, we will bear our misfortunes with courage. We must not expect to have all life's sweets, and none of its bitters."

"No, dear," she said. "God is giving us bitters already to check the cloy of our present sweets."

"I taste none of the bitters, my love, except in sympathy with you."

"Nor I," said Mathilde, "only when I think of your natural anxieties."

"Then let us only think of the blessings of the time, and take no note of fear. Our hearts had long been one; He has permitted that our hands, too, should be joined; with this sunshine let us be content."

"Content!" said Mathilde, with a sigh. "It is hard to be hunted, yet only to have deserved well of those who are our enemies."

"Harder if we deserved ill of them," de Fournier replied. "Oh, for a free command with a thousand such spirits as the two Delaunys—*aîné* and *cadet*, as de la Galetierre called them. I would sweep Paris free of Robespierre, Danton, Marat, and their vile crew."

And then his conscience smote him. It was hardly

good to brag and flee, for that was his present course. Mathilde made no reply for a little while, fearing to encourage this passion of resistance.

"We must bend our heads to the storm, dear, when to face it is destruction. I fear I am a hindrance to your plans," she said presently, in a soft, caressing voice.

"I have no plans, dear, no course, no compass, but am happy to drift with you as God shall please; and I would ask Him just now for no more heavenly fortune."

"Dear Henri!" said Mathilde; but she sighed, detecting in his answer a note of resignation that sounded to her like a tone of sacrifice. "If fate offered you the cue to fight, I would not stay your arm; but there is a time to fight and a time to retreat."

"And a time to love," he said, his face aglow; "and come what may we have had our supreme, our happy hour."

"You are very good to me," said Mathilde.

"Hist! Joseph is riding back to us."

"Pardon," said the faithful guide, "it is wise that we push on."

De Fournier released Mathilde's hand. The horses advanced into a measured trot. No more words were spoken. They were now in the open road, and approaching Evreux. There was a light in the distance.

"I will reconnoitre," said Joseph. "If all is well, I shall return at once. There is a narrow road half a league on the right of the village, and a stretch of forest; be so good as to await me there."

Joseph galloped on. It was a straight road for half a league; then it swerved to the right. They kept him in sight to the bend. The light disappeared, to come in view again when they reached the narrow way which Joseph had mentioned. Here they drew within the wood, and sat quietly beneath the stars.

"You object to emigrate?" said Mathilde, presently.

"It is cowardly."

"But it is no more than a retreat before overwhelming forces," she said, "such as is permissible in war."

"But one does not retreat and leave one's captain behind," said Henri.

"You mean the king," said Mathilde. "But he has laid down his command."

"There is the queen, dear," he answered.

"Yes," said Mathilde, with a sigh; "there is the queen."

"I would do anything for your sake, my love," said Henri, her hand once more in his; "but you would not ask me to sacrifice my honour?"

"I think I would, dear husband, if it were to save your life," said Mathilde.

"To lose one's honour is to die."

"But to put honour aside when it is powerless, that you may take it up again when it can be useful," she said, "that is not the death of honour."

"Hush, dear," he said, bending over her. "There are troopers on the road, and they are coming this way."

He slipped from his saddle, and led the two horses within the wood. He had scarcely done so, when a company of National Guards halted almost in front of them.

"I tell you," said one who was evidently in command, "yonder is the road to Lisieux, and the direct way to Honfleur."

"It may be so, Monsieur Laroche," said another; "it is certainly not the road to St. Germain, and Rouen is leagues away on our right. The question is, which is monsieur's route."

"That I will tell you later," said Laroche. "It may be to rest at Pont-Audemer, or further afield at Rouen, or on to Dieppe."

"Monsieur is vague," said the other speaker.

"Monsieur is led by the nose, like a dog on the scent," said Laroche; "and the scent is weak at present."

"You thought it strong yesterday," said the other.

"Stronger still the day before," said Laroche, "and the day before that; and by this time our quarry is safe among the foxes of La Vendée, I make no doubt, while we were hunting them miles out of their course."

"Why La Vendée?"

"The turbulent noble they call Marquis de la Rouaire is an old friend of the Delaunys. He has raised Brittany against the decrees of the National Assembly, and the aristocrats of La Vendée are going over to him."

"But why, then, did you expect the Delaunys were making for Dieppe?"

"I obeyed orders, my friend."

"Against your will?"

"No, against my judgment; I have no will under orders."

"You are a queer fellow, Citizen Laroche."

"Is it so queer to submit to discipline?"

"No; but if I had orders and knew they were wrong, I would not obey them," said the other, who was in military command of Laroche's posse.

"Then one day you would be shot for disobedience," said Laroche.

"You talk as if you were an army man."

"I respect the training that makes men mere machines in the hands of the great chief; but I would hate to sink my individuality behind a knapsack."

"A droll fellow," responded the soldier. "Why, I'd rather a thousand times be a soldier than an agent of police, a detective, a spy, monsieur, saving your gracious presence."

This was said in a tone of banter.

"Call spying investigation, my friend, and it becomes dignified. The officer of police is a diplomat, and he may be a patriot in the first degree. A block may be a soldier. It requires a man of education, a gentleman, to be a great detective."

"Thank you, Gentleman Laroche. I thought there were no longer any gentlemen in France."

"Some men can't help being gentlemen," said Laroche; "it is in the blood. You are made otherwise, Captain Millet. And now that you have breathed your troop, let us drink to our better fortunes."

"And better tempers," said the other. "You carry something at your saddle besides pistols."

The soldier smacked his lips.

"There is no finer cognac in all France," said Laroche; "it puts new life into a man. Pass it round; we'll replenish at Lisieux."

For a little while the rest of the words of the two chiefs were muffled in the conversation of others. The troop had made a general halt. Most of the men had dismounted. By and by the word to remount was given.

"And now which way does monsieur wish to travel?" asked the commander.

"No longer over foothpaths and through forests, tearing one's eyes out with branches of trees and risking one's neck over ditches," said Laroche; "but on the high road, and straight for Honfleur."

"A long ride, monsieur."

"With plenty of resting-places *en route*. The Golden Swan, at Evreux, cannot be far away if yonder's the main road; and old Adrien has a good cellar, Citizen Captain."

"Forward! then," said the other, and the troop clattered away, some in single file, others two abreast.

"They will meet Joseph," said Mathilde, anxiously.

"No; he will see them along the road."

"A terrible name, Laroche!" she said.

"It was the captain who called the other Laroche?"

"Yes."

"A police agent?"

"A spy, and the creature of Robespierre," she said.

"You are well posted, my dear. Is this the man whom the little miniature painter warned you against?"

"He is her father," said Mathilde, lowering her voice. "He was educated for the law, she told me, and is a revolutionary fanatic. I have not seen the girl for many days. I fear he has discovered her interest in us."

"It was fortunate that Joseph placed us here."

"I wonder if our flight from the Hermitage was wise?" said Mathilde.

"I think so," de Fournier replied; "but it may now be discreet to change our route."

"We are going towards the coast?"

"Yes, towards the coast," said Henri.

"My dear love," exclaimed Mathilde, "is it possible that——"

"If we secure a boat, yes."

"Now I know indeed that you love me," she said. "Kiss me, Henri. You will put aside your honour for your love?"

"My darling!" exclaimed de Fournier, drawing her towards him. "If we get to the coast, and Joseph has good news of your father and the duchess, we will cross to England. Monsieur Bertin has made all the arrangements through a friend, who endangers his own life in carrying them out. Joseph expects news from the Château de Louvet by a messenger who will await us at Honfleur. He told me all this while he was transforming me from count to citizen, from de Fournier, at your service, to Citizen Duval—and you have never told me how you like my costume."

"Nay, let us talk seriously. Do you think we shall be successful?"

"I hope so."

"Do you think so?"

"If we are, we shall be pioneers of a colony of friends, and we shall find a home on the southern coast of England. But there are conditions, dear."

"Conditions?" said Mathilde, noticing that de Fournier did not speak in an earnest, convincing manner.

"That the men of the new colony, the moment the time is ripe for action, shall return with their swords to France."

"But if we fail?"

"Why, then, we are in the hands of God."

"And the Revolutionary Tribunal," said Mathilde. "Well, we can only die together; and I shall know that your love for me has been all in all. I am a selfish wife."

"You are the sweetest wife in all the world; and if God has not altogether abandoned France for her past sins, why He cannot give us over to our enemies. Half the miseries of life are in their anticipation; let us enjoy the happiness of the present while we may. Look

how brightly the stars shine; yonder, I think, is Venus —how gay she is!"

"And yonder is Mars, how red and threatening!" replied Mathilde.

The time ran quickly on with sweet and anxious passages of love and hope, and doubt and fear. De Fournier reconciled his heart and ambition to any venture that might secure the happiness of Mathilde. His love for her overcame all other thoughts. His duty and his ambition, everything, belonged to her. She was the one treasure that fate had entrusted to his keeping. And now he began to count the minutes that delayed Joseph's return.

"He is coming," said Mathilde. "Listen."

"Yes, thank God!" said de Fournier, "it is a single rider," as the galloping of the horse began to break upon the stillness of the night.

Presently the gallop became a trot, and, nearing the spot where the fugitives were concealed, the rider reined in his steed and stopped by the fringe of the forest.

"It is I—Joseph," he said.

"Welcome, my brave friend," responded de Fournier; and Joseph's heart beat gratefully at the word friend.

"All's well," said Joseph, "at present; but we are pursued—we are pursued. Laroche and a company of National Guards are at Evreux by this; they will sup there. I heard their plans for the night. We must push on to Lisieux; there is a road that avoids Evreux; everything depends on our getting to Honfleur before them, if that is their destination."

"We are in your hands, Joseph," said de Fournier, adding a brief explanation of what they had seen and heard.

"It was most fortunate," said Joseph, "they did not come upon you. Their hunt is towards the coast, one way or the other; I saw them coming along the road in good time to avoid them. For so shrewd a villain Laroche talked loud and free. From the few words I overheard I don't think they have Honfleur in their

minds; most like they will turn aside for Rouen; it may be that they have a scout awaiting them at Evreux. Between Evreux and Lisieux there is a village off the main road little known, with an old inn, the Cabaret la Normandie; I have good report of it. We can rest there for an hour, and bait our cattle."

"Then lead on, Joseph," said de Fournier; and once more the trio started on their perilous journey.

On through the night, with occasional alarms; now at a gallop, now steadily, to breathe their horses, now walking stilly past wayside lodges with closed gates and dim avenues of trees, giving Évreux a wide berth, and pulling up at last on the outskirts of a sleepy village. Here Mathilde and de Fournier remained in the shadow of a clump of chestnut-trees, while Joseph made arrangements for their entertainment.

"You have not been to England ever?" said Mathilde.

"No," said de Fournier. "Your father has?"

"Yes, and liked it; he went on a mission from King Louis XV."

"That counted well for him once with France, not forgetting all his other services; to-day it is on such evidence that the most illustrious of Frenchmen are condemned. Promise me, dearest, when we get safe across the Channel and you are well placed, I may return for a brief space to serve my country."

"You chafe, dear heart, at this enterprise of ours; but oh, my love, you are my country, my heaven, my all!"

"God bless you, dearest!" said de Fournier, falling back into the toils of his affections. He felt like a traitor to his king and country, though flying from certain death; for it could hardly be that if taken he would be charged simply with resisting authority, but with the assassination of the people's officers and representatives. Moreover, with Grébauval as his enemy, his liberty was a grievance; and when he reflected on what his enemy's designs against Mathilde might be, he had no thoughts of loyalty that did not belong to her alone.

There had been some village festival at the inn, which had kept the landlord and his wife up later than usual. Joseph, to his great delight, found them staunch royalists. He returned for his two companions in high spirits.

"A loyal house, and with supper ready," said Joseph; "and I propose a rest for Citoyenne Duval, of not one hour, but three."

"Merci, monsieur le capitaine Joseph," said de Fournier, with a laugh. "Come, good wife Duval, and be refreshed with supper and with rest."

Out from the shadow sprang the two horses, and in a few minutes they were in the old inn stables, being regaled with oatmeal and water and rubbed down and made comfortable.

Madame of the inn received Mathilde with matronly kindliness; took her to her own room, where the disguised countess laid aside her hat and cloak, and, after a basin of soup and a cup of wine, undressed and went to bed—for so the good dame advised—and from sheer fatigue fell fast asleep; while the count and Joseph sat down to a supper of game pie and sausages, and a couple of bottles of red wine.

The landlord joined them afterwards, and produced pipes and tobacco; and the three hours sped right merrily, notwithstanding the gruesome news the landlord had to relate second-hand as travellers' tales of Paris and Lyons which he had recently heard at Lisieux. It seemed that the spirit of the Revolutionary Tribunal was stirring up the worst passions of the people right through France. De Fournier was glad to hear that the king had friends in Normandy, many and true; and that even along the coast, as near as Honfleur, the insurrectionary movement was not so popular as the agents of the Convention in Paris seemed to desire. Recently several curious and unexpected travellers had rested at the inn, most of them, as they had gathered, favourable to the king, but others, revolutionists and of a bloodthirsty nature, overbearing too, and not over honest; highwaymen, some, by their talk. It was true, the landlord said, that there was great distress in the

country districts, scarcity of corn, and heavy imposts of taxes; but he thanked God that his own little harvest had been well got, and that with the help of a frugal wife he was fairly well off and able to help his neighbours.

"I feel quite a new man," said the count to Joseph, when the time for continuing their journey had arrived. "I might be Citizen Duval in very truth, so gorged am I, my Joseph, and hot in the mouth with our host's tobacco. It is time I called my wife, the good dame Citoyenne Duval, eh?"

"I fear it is," said Joseph, a smile spreading all over his honest face. "You are merry, monsieur; I'm right glad of it; and you wear your new clothes as becomes a patriot citizen."

Joseph fumbled with a couple of revolutionary cockades in his coat-pocket, which he had not yet dared to recommend to the count's attention.

"Why, so I am a patriot citizen," said the count. "Madame Duval's patriot—nobody else's, I swear; not the king's, not the nation's, only hers;" and he repeated "only hers" half in sorrow, half in joy, as he ascended to the low-ceilinged room, with its rushlight burning inside a talc lantern upon the floor, and awoke her as gently as might be from a refreshing sleep.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"LOVE CAN HOPE WHERE REASON WOULD DESPAIR."

It was nearly daylight when the two good people wished their guests God-speed; and de Fournier's spirits rose with the prospect of putting leagues between themselves and their possible pursuers before the day was over.

"You shall wear these, monsieur le comte and madame la comtesse, and I shall call you no other than citoyenne and citoyen for the rest of our journey," said

Joseph, after their first long spin, and they were riding leisurely.

He produced a couple of tricolour favours ready mounted with pins, adding, in response to de Fournier's look of surprise, "Nay, your disguise is not complete without; and it is only acting; our hearts are true, but we must fight the enemy with his own weapons."

"He is right, dear," said Mathilde, taking the tricolour and pinning it on her breast.

"It is a hateful thing to do," said de Fournier.

"Nay, dear; the king wore the cockade," said Mathilde.

"The gravest of his mistakes; he is a prisoner by reason of it."

"It was Monsieur Bertin's orders, *s'il vous plaît*," said Joseph; "and the same colours were in your new uniform, monsieur le comte."

"With a difference, Joseph, with a difference," said de Fournier, toying with the revolutionary emblem.

"And, moreover, you are vouched for as a good patriot, and your name is Duval," said Joseph, "Citoyen Duval and Citoyenne Duval, your wife."

Joseph smiled as he produced an exceptionally clever forgery of permits to travel and to quit France, signed by Robespierre. It was no very difficult matter at that time to buy such passports. An excellent trade in similar documents had long been established in Paris.

"Monsieur Bertin has been more than thoughtful," said de Fournier.

"And it is possible he may join us—it is possible he may quickly follow us with madame and the young ladies," said Joseph.

"And what of the Duke and Duchess de Louvet?"

"There is a way made safe for them," Joseph replied, "if the duke will accept assistance. Citoyenne de Louvet is the friend of the Deputy Grébauval, who assures her safety; besides, she is indeed a revolutionary."

"Citoyenne de Louvet!" exclaimed de Fournier; but

he checked the uncomplimentary remark that was on his lips, and looked at Mathilde.

"Have patience, dear; put on the new colours."

"Do, monsieur le comte," said Joseph.

"You are Monsieur Bertin's representative?"

"He told me, *s'il vous plaît*, that I was to act as if I were your captain."

"Then this" (holding up the cockade) "is a matter of discipline, eh?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Very well; a soldier knows how to obey orders," said the count, "and hopes to learn patience with his love," he added, smiling at Mathilde and donning the hateful badge.

And so they rode boldly for Honfleur.

A bribe well placed, the passports duly honoured, and the party dismounted at the sign of the Ship. So far all went well. An agent of Monsieur Bertin sauntered in as they handed their horses to the stable-man; Joseph was to take them back to the Hermitage.

While the two guests, bourgeois citizen and his wife, took some refreshment and prepared for their journey, Joseph went forth to the rendezvous where a lugger was to be ready for the journey across the Channel. But, alas, the lugger was not ready. The enterprising fisherman had been arrested, and his boat was moored alongside the quay, in charge of an officer of the local revolutionary committee that had only just been constituted. Monsieur Bertin's agent gave Joseph this information as they walked to the quay. It was possible, he said, that he might still procure another vessel. He had provided a small boat for them, and they would be picked up outside the harbour if things turned out favourably for embarking; but within the last four-and-twenty hours the new officers had been very active in taking note of all outward-bound vessels, down to the smallest boat. The night was favourable, however, and he hoped for success. It had surprised him, he confessed, that they had passed into the place so freely. His own idea had been to make a rendezvous a mile or two south, along the coast, but Monsieur Bertin's in-

structions were imperative, and as little or no emigration had been effected from Honfleur, it was considered safer than most other points on the coast. Moreover, the people, until the previous few days, had not been as much roused by events in Paris as their neighbours, and there had, in a sort, been many favourable signs for the king.

Reconnoitring the creek where the agent's small boat lay, they were challenged by a gendarme, evidently posted for some purpose unfavourable to the agent's plans. He was, however, able to pass the officer's scrutiny, and said he wanted merely to fetch some fish from his boat for his friend's supper. The officer disliked to interfere with a well-known citizen, but no boats could leave Honfleur without a permit of the committee, on this particular night, at all events. Monsieur Bertin's agent whispered something in the officer's ear, and then, saying aloud that he would come for his fish later, returned to the inn with Joseph.

"In two hours' time," he said, "the course will be clear; he will then be relieved, and by a man who is in my employment. I shall know how to detain him. Till then hold your friends in readiness."

Before the two hours were up, however, there rode pell-mell into Honfleur Laroche and his posse. De Fournier had barely time to draw before Laroche covered him with a pistol, and two of his dismounted troopers, with their captain, were at his back.

"Resistance is as useless as your disguise," said Laroche; "I would know you among a thousand."

Had he been alone, de Fournier, spite of pistols and warnings, would have made a fight of it, though he should have lost his life in the struggle, but Mathilde clung to his arm. Joseph only arrived in time to saddle his horses and escape. His first impulse was to share the fate of the fugitives whom he had led so unfortunately; his second was to hang on their rear and note their dispositions. With this object he crept stealthily through the town and made a long détour. Commending himself and his cause to God, he made for the road to Paris.

It was with a sad heart that Mathilde, early the next morning, found herself retracing her steps towards St. Germain. The count, by every kind of little attention and with many a comforting word, endeavoured to smooth the way. Laroche, mindful of his daughter's interest in his prisoners, had shown much consideration for their comfort. He had permitted them to ride with a long distance between them and their guard, so that they should be free from immediate surveillance. He had, however, first taken de Fournier's word that he would make no attempt at escape. The count, having been disarmed and being without the slightest hope of rescue, had given his word; and, as if by a mutual understanding, neither he nor Mathilde talked of their mishap. They recalled the first days of their meeting, before the count went to America, a beardless boy, full of romantic aspirations. They recalled the bravery of Lafayette, and rejoiced that he had escaped from the army which had ungratefully taken sides against him. They did not know that he had fallen into the hands of the Austrians. Good news often pioneers the truth of disaster. Mathilde even smiled, as the count confessed to the timidity of his first love for her; how dismayed he had been in her presence; how she had made him tremble more than all the British troops he had met in the New World.

Now that she realised the worst, Mathilde was just as brave as the count. So long as their fate was in doubt she was timid, almost to cowardice. The worst being realised, their capture complete, she was bent on making the best of it, resolved to let her love and fortitude shine upon the shadow of her husband's defeat.

All day, except for a short respite to bait both man and beast, the prisoners and their escort wended their way along the dusty roads, through fields of half-gleaned wheat, by yellowing woods, skirting quiet villages, and crossing shining rivers. At night they lay at Lisieux; and the next day on again they rode towards Evreux.

"If it be agreeable," said Laroche, "to-morrow night we propose to rest at the Hermitage."

"We must obey your orders, monsieur," said the count.

"Nay, let it be so," interposed Mathilde.

"I thought to please you with this proposal," said Laroche, in an offended tone.

"And so you do," Mathilde replied; "and there is another, not present, whom your consideration would please."

"And who may that be, citoyenne?" asked Laroche.

"Your daughter, monsieur," said Mathilde.

"Do not name her," said Laroche; "it were better not."

"Why, monsieur? Because she is good and kind, and has a great heart?"

"Because she is untrue to France."

"You mean that love and friendship are sacred things to her."

"There is no love or friendship outside the love of France," said Laroche; "but I would prefer not to talk of this. Is it your wish we rest at the Hermitage?"

"Yes," said the count.

"I purpose then to despatch a messenger thither to give the people warning of our coming."

Meanwhile, Joseph, having borrowed a fresh horse at Evreux, was well on his way to St. Germain to inform Monsieur Bertin of the failure of their plans and the desirability of changing his own scheme of removal, and in the hope of raising there a rescue party to meet Laroche and his prisoners between St. Germain and the barriers.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHILE THE LARK WAS SINGING.

In due course Mathilde and the count drew rein at the Hermitage. The farmer and his wife received them with tears, but had overlooked nothing that could render their stay a comfort so long as it lasted. Laroche

also took every precaution to make the place a safe prison. Nevertheless, it was a blessed house to Mathilde and de Fournier, their first home. Though it had been converted into a gaol, nothing could change the sweet memories that would cling about it for ever in their imagination. So they dreamed on, and said naught to each other about their journey, nor of their hopes. They were together; for the present that was enough. To both of them came the agonising thought, "If they should separate us!" But neither uttered what was in their hearts, except such things as were lovely and tender; and when they arose the next morning soon after daylight, the world of woods and fields, the garden of scattered roses, and the song of birds seemed to smile upon them and give them good assurance of a future. A lark sung high up against heaven's gate, and it pleased Mathilde to follow it with her prayers and to feel that it was pleading for her.

The farmer and the humble partner of his joys and sorrows and their one man-servant came to the door to bid their guests adieu and add their humble blessings. The good-wife, in her brown woollen dress and apron, her sabots and coloured cross-over about her brown neck, had to be supported by the farmer, who every now and then raised his hand to his forehead in respectful salutation of de Fournier's kindly words.

"Citizen," said Laroche, "on my own behalf, and by desire of monsieur le capitaine and his citizen troopers and those whose servants we are, we thank you for your hospitality; at the same time it is well that you should know you are liable to arrest, and your property to confiscation, for your previous harbouring of enemies of the Revolution."

"No, no, monsieur," whimpered the farmer's wife.

"It is death to give succour to the enemies of France; and that you have done," continued Laroche, as he thrust his pistols into the holsters of his cumbersome saddle.

"I am ready to suffer," said the old man, looking steadily at Laroche, "if it is a crime to succour the unfortunate."

The servant-man, who had been in the family of

the farmer's master, Monsieur Bertin, stood forward, silently subscribing to the old man's loyal sentiment.

"Moreover, it is my duty to stand by the noblesse; they have stood by me and mine."

"Then you are exceptions," said Laroche, "and they have not stood by France—not as you mean by standing by."

"They have their duties; we have ours," said the farmer.

"Stood by!" said Laroche, with a curl of his lip. "They have stood by while the people starved; stood by while the people have grown the corn they might not eat, and paid taxes for kings to squander on wanton women; stood by with the poor begging for food, without moving a hand to help them; and while we are talking here they are standing by in the hope that foreign troops will swarm over France and chain us afresh with the shackles we have broken."

"To-day your arguments are unanswerable," said de Fournier, speaking for the first time since he had mounted his horse, except to reassure Mathilde and say farewell to their humble friends of the Hermitage. "You have command of the situation; you back your opinions with prisons and scaffolds."

"In that we take a lesson from you, citizen," said Laroche.

"How from me?"

"You and yours gave us the Bastille; we respond with the Temple, La Force, and the Conciergerie."

"The wrongs that may have been done by the class to which I belong do not make right of the wrongs you commit."

"The wrongs of a thousand years have to be avenged. It is justice," said Laroche.

"What justice is there in murdering a nobleman for the fault of an ancestor?"

"An example," said Laroche. "The God whom you and the priests have monopolised amongst you, even He visited the sins of the fathers upon the children, and made the innocent a by-word and a scoffing, inasmuch as they were legatees of the past. Besides——"

"You speak from your head, not your heart," said de Fournier; "and you seek a mere controversial justification for a tyranny worse than that you claim to have overthrown."

"Not overthrown, monsieur le comte, as you are wont to be called; only in course of overthrow. Our battle is not at home only; it is beyond the frontiers, against the foreigner, whom Louis Capet encourages to march upon us."

Mathilde touched de Fournier's arm as he was about to reply, and he turned towards her.

"Hush!" she said. "You are going to make an angry answer; pray don't; the gendarme officer is growing impatient."

"I will say no more, dear," he replied.

"We waste time, Citizen Laroche," said the officer of the troop.

"Very well; give the word, then."

"Attention!" said the officer. "Right wheel; forward!"

"You will follow the advance guard," said Laroche to de Fournier and his wife. "You shall have a reasonable distance for conversation; we are not gaolers."

De Fournier thanked Laroche, and, taking the bridle of Mathilde's horse, led her through the cottage-gate into the path which by and by joined the high-road to St. Germain.

It was a monotonous ride to Paris. No incident on the way occurred to make it memorable. Joseph had found St. Germain more or less in the hands of the new authorities. He had been unable to approach Monsieur Bertin's house until midnight. Then he climbed the park wall on its less frequented side, and made his way into the butler's room, where it was understood in case of need he would find an unbarred door. He learnt that the house was in possession of a company of Municipal Guards from Paris. Their chief officer had only that day informed madame that if Monsieur Bertin did not give himself up within four-and-twenty hours, she and her daughters would be removed to Paris. Ma-

thilde and de Fournier were spared this depressing piece of news.

Their spirits fell as they entered Paris and noted the crowds of strange people, armed and noisy, some marching in motley companies to join the troops at the frontiers, others singing vile songs and brandishing their weapons in a mad, imbecile kind of way. Within the barrier of the Champs-Elysées a fresh contingent of troops joined Laroche's civil command. They were needful; for, passing along the Rue St. Honoré, a vast crowd surged against them, groaning and hissing, and shouting hideous threats. The new contingent brought with them new captives. Every conceivable noise seemed to be in the air as they pushed their way along the streets, some of which were still as death. It was in the leading thoroughfares where their course was impeded. In the back streets the people who remained indoors had mostly barricaded their houses. All the shops were closed. An atmosphere of terror was over the city, all the more threatening in its silent places than where it was most apparent in storm and stress and wild ferment of pikes and the rolling of insurrectionary drums.

CHAPTER XXV.

CAPTIVES OF THE COMMUNE: MATHILDE AND DE FOURNIER IN SEPARATE PRISONS.

TIME and a restless people have wiped out the architectural landmarks of the French Revolution; but the spectres of that awful past remain.

You may trace the red footsteps of the terror through street and alley, in park and square, though few of the once familiar surroundings any longer remain. The very names of the historic localities have been changed. The ghosts are there all the same, and in all weathers; in the sunshine, in the rain, when summer winds make

gentle ripples on the river, when winter gales blow stiffly about the grim towers of the Palais de Justice, and the snow falls thick upon the adjacent quays, and whitens the Tuileries gardens—still the same sad memories cling about the beautiful city.

So long as nations have a history, so long will the story of the agony of Paris touch the universal heart and appeal to the universal imagination.

The pick-axe and the spade have demolished the old prisons, almost as completely as the Bastille. Under the tyranny of kings there was only one Bastille; under the changing governments of the people there were many, and of worse repute.

The demolition of Old Paris stopped at the Palais de Justice and the Conciergerie. The spirit of change has paused in an uncertain way round about the historic prisons. You still come upon ragged bits of the architecture of the time, glimpses of old houses, sections of ancient streets; but the district. as the Marseillais saw it marching through to the Pont-Neuf, is no more, neither are its unpaved streets nor its atmosphere reeking of the gutters, but always picturesque—in the summer with blinds and shutters against the sun, and curious signs indicative of varied trades, and inns and cabarets, and hôtels of wealthy citizens standing back in quiet courtyards.

On the other side of the Seine one comes upon similar suggestions of a wild past, with its once quaint streets of St. Martin, St. Honoré, St. Denis; its Halle aux Blés; its Rue de la Monnaie, which is still the same narrow way though busy with modern magasins de marchandises, and its intermediate conglomeration of passages, alleys, and mixed thoroughfares. Many of the streets of 1792, with the Rue Barnabé, are, however, to-day only memories—but what memories!

One looks in vain for the old house where Jaffray Ellicott courted Marie Bruyset; but there are relics sufficient, between the Rue du Temple, the Mont de Piété, and the newer buildings of the Rue du Pont-Neuf and the Quai du Louvre, to enable one to picture the actualities of the scenes in which the humanities of

the time had much ado not to be stamped out altogether under the heels of the fanatical insurrectionaries.

A word or two by way of historical reminiscence will serve to explain to the general reader the character of the Conciergerie and the singularity of its name. It is an integral part of the Palais de Justice. Originally a fortress, it became a royal palace. Kings, as well as Republics, must have prisons. The French monarch who lived at this stately abode on the Seine in the early days preferred a handy one; so he enlarged his palace in that direction. He built a residence for the governor of his house of detention, with its dungeons and its instruments of torture, and they called him the "Concierge" of the palace; his special department therefore came to be known as the Conciergerie; hence the name of the historic prison; and in the present economy of domestic life in Paris the "concierge" of our day may be said to inherit the autocratic instincts of his more distinguished though less genial predecessor on the banks of the Seine.

Prior to the Revolution the Conciergerie had a history which for misery and bloodshed it would have taxed human invention to rival. During the feuds of the Armagnacs and the Bourguignons the "Cabochiens" broke into the gaol and killed every prisoner, man and woman. They strewed the palace yard with corpses, among them the Count d'Armagnac, Constable of France, six bishops, and several members of the Paris Parliament. The place was nearly burnt down in 1776, but a few years later it was restored, in time for a revival of its evil reputation.

There it stands to this day, with its two pointed towers, and all its romantic and ghastly memories, on the banks of the Seine, which during the terror ran with blood, conveyed in a gulley constructed from the guillotine's first establishment, in the Place de la Grêve. If it is difficult in these brighter days, standing by the gaily-freighted river, to realise the coming and going of prisoners condemned ere they were tried,—one daily procession of fair women and noble men, on their way to death,—you may enter the awful gates that now

swing freely to and fro for the admission of the curious. You may see the cells and rooms, the stone dungeons that were packed with prisoners of every class and grade. With an ordinary effort of imagination, you may hear the ribald shouts of frenzied men, the sighs of insulted womanhood, the defiant songs of reckless soldiers, and you may smell the stench of it; all too terrible for words to describe.

Here, one sad day towards the end of August, 1789, came de Fournier, in the custody of Laroche and an escort of gendarmes.

Other prisoners arrived at the same time. Two of them were royalists of distinction, who had in their day been pre-eminent among the most illustrious of Frenchmen.

De Fournier, in comparatively humble clothes, attracted no particular attention from the crowd that had gathered around the approaches to the Palais de Justice. Through its guarded gates and beyond its grim courtyard the Conciergerie was hidden.

The majority of the crowd were women. They screamed and yelled and hissed the two royalist prisoners, whose nobility of demeanour and at the same time quiet submissiveness to a cruel destiny might have awed ordinary mortals into silent respect.

But these were not ordinary mortals. They were travesties of womanhood, sexless fiends in human shape. They were creatures of the night, who, on the 10th of August, had dabbled their hands in the blood of the king's guards in the Tuileries gardens, dabbled in it and drunk it round the insurgent fires, in which the flesh of heroic soldiers and stricken aristocrats had been flung with the wreck of royal apartments. They had assisted to parade bleeding heads on fearsome pikes. They had played the part of priestesses at obscene feasts, and taken awful oaths at devilish assemblies. Already their shadows were falling upon the immediate future of the Conciergerie, when de Fournier and his fellow-victims attracted their attention.

It was only for a few minutes that the prisoners created a slight diversion from the business of the morn-

ing, which was to salute the procession of death on its way to the guillotine. The tumbrels were already drawn up outside the gates. Presently they would enter, and return with pale passengers, many of whom would suffer their bitterest moments in the execrations of the mob.

De Fournier noticed, topping the rest of her grim sisterhood, Pierre Grappin's wife, cynically known as Madame Angélique. She was the fiendish apex of a motley crew that oscillated round about her like witches in a hideous dream, and in every kind of costume under the sun, some half-dressed like men, some in breeches, others in soldiers' coats, some with mob-caps and tricolour ribbons, others in the *bonnet rouge;* most of them lantern-jawed and pale, dark rims around their eyes, and with wet lips.

They flung their arms aloft, brandishing pikes and scythes and muskets. There were naked arms red with blood, arms in coats of the National Guards, arms in bloody gowns, arms with short sleeves, arms with long sleeves, hands like claws and hands with big bony fingers, none of them but were grimy and grim with the gore of victims, the guillotine's or the slain of no less grim sans-culotte and revolutionary brigands.

So strangely do all kinds of things appeal to a man's sympathies at perilous moments and in the midst of great sorrows, that de Fournier found himself pitying Pierre that his name and honour should have been shared with so vile a creature as this mad impersonation of revolutionary mania. His heart was heavily laden, and yet it felt the shadow of this other fellow-sufferer's grief. The pity of the whole business gathered round about his own affliction. He was dazed with the impress of it upon his mind, that was stung to madness by his parting with Mathilde. He had said farewell to her at the portals of the Abbaye prison.

It was not until his escort had been increased by a fresh contingent of men on entering Paris that Laroche had informed de Fournier of their different destinations, his wife to be delivered into the custody of the governor of the Abbaye, he to the Conciergerie.

Mathildé had behaved with womanly fortitude. It was de Fournier who broke down with grief and passion. Then a sullen despair took possession of him, with a bitter underlying current of a longing for a great revenge. He was right in thinking that they owed their separation to Grébauval, and every conceivable indignity that his imagination could invent seemed possible from his rival, who hated him by reason of their blood relationship, and who would hate him the more that his own action had hurried on the marriage it was his chief desire to prevent.

Whoever might have originated the trite saying, "When Greek meets Greek, then comes the tug of war"—a far more truthful indication of intense hostility than the more correct lines, "When Greek meets Greek, then was the tug of war"—the spirit of it is as old as rebellion, civil war, and family quarrels. In the French Revolution the bitterest and most uncompromising conflicts were those of French against French. The story of the time is one hourly illustration of the malignity of hostile factions and competing committees, each annihilating the other with a far more bloody malice than Frenchmen showed when they met their foreign foes.

The dullest imagination could conceive the animosity with which Grébauval and de Fournier might assail each other should opportunity offer; and one follows their brief history in the great tragedy of Paris with a keen hope that Fate may still have in store such a change of destiny for the new prisoner of the Conciergerie as shall place him free and face to face with his powerful enemy.

Grébauval was one of those persistent lovers, so called, who, failing a legitimate direction to his ardent desires, is willing to brave every obstacle of custom, law, morality, religion, or hatred of the woman he affects to worship, in order to encompass his ends; and who makes possession alike an object of a base pride and a sour vengeance. The sea-stories of skippers who steal their unwilling brides and go down with them to the depths in their phantom ships, have no more tragic

impulse than Grébauval could develop out of what once might have been a reasonable instinct of love. Experience of the atrocities of the prisons within the short time between July and the September we are approaching, had steeled his heart against all the finer emotions that might have had a place there. Robespierre nursed to the last a passion that was akin to love as well as ambition for the daughter of the Duc d'Orléans. It is as if the god who is supposed to inspire the divine passion, disgusted with the thing he had created, handed over the trimming of the flame to some soul-destroying imp. When Grébauval learnt that Mathilde had escaped him through the Church at St. Germain, whatever sentiment of a holy passion might at one time have touched his heart, however faintly, dried up; and there remained only the wormwood of disappointment, the gall of lust, and the desire of vengeance.

The prison was full to overflowing when de Fournier arrived there. Almost every day new victims had fallen before the Revolutionary Tribunal; but the work went on too slowly for the municipal authorities, who were now in full power. The Commune had overawed the National Assembly. Grébauval in the Chamber had supported the municipality when it came to the bar. He joined in the cry of "Vive la Commune!" when the galleries applauded Tallien's defiant answer to the Girondist chief, Vergniaud. De Fournier, therefore, arrived at the Conciergerie at a most dangerous moment, though Grébauval's chief interest was in Mathilde.

It was, however, by a stroke of good fortune that de Fournier was flung into a cell with fourteen others, among whom was M. de la Galetierre, his comrade in the retreat to St. Germain. The citizen Galetierre informed him that he had been at first placed in a dungeon with two murderers for companions. By the virtue of some gold pieces, and the interposition of a friendly municipal, he had been transferred the next day to his present quarters.

"And what is more to the purpose," he said, "I was in time, as you are to participate in a scheme of escape that promises success."

"Escape?" said de Fournier, "with the secret among so many?"

"Yes. When you arrived the fear was that you might be a spy thrown in among us. Did you not notice the smile of relief that went round when I knew you and we embraced?"

"I did not notice it," said the new prisoner; "my faculties are numbed. I am broken, dear friend, broken!"

"You shall be set up again; we are rich in this cell, dear comrade; six of us have money enough to provide decent food and moderately good wine. We keep up our spirits, and shall revive yours. My wife is not far away; I hope to join her very soon."

"Alas, dear friend, it is of my wife that I am thinking, not of myself," said de Fournier; and then the two sat down upon a bench beneath a window looking upon a small open space that was only separated from the Seine by a low wall, and de Fournier related to him all that had happened since they had parted.

M. de la Galetierre understood and appreciated his friend's fears for Mathilde, but fired him with a new hope. The window above them was not far from the ground. It was protected by iron bars, six of which had already been sawn through, and could be easily removed. Two others would undergo similar operations at night; and within a few hours the course would be free. The room in which they were confined was a makeshift prison; and once outside the window there would be no difficulty in escaping. There were few precautions against escape. At first they had a terrible outer guard to fear. Two dogs were the sentinels. The concierge relieved his officers at night by trained hounds, mongrel-bred beasts, half mastiff, half bloodhound, that were let loose in the courtyard. Two of the brutes were posted in the small open space beneath the window through which the fourteen men had resolved to climb. Their leader, a man of athletic strength and a curious and varied knowledge, had tamed the slobbering four-footed guardians of the night. For days such pieces of meat as could be spared

were accumulated for the dog-tamer, who exercised other powers over the animals. On two special occasions he had obtained access to them. It was not very difficult to get into the courtyard, but no prisoner ever cared to run the risk of being torn to pieces. The prisoners called their leader Daniel, and no lion's den could have been more dangerous than the courtyard of the Conciergerie after dark. But Daniel went boldly into the midst of the brutes. He not only pampered their appetites, but he had a knack of seizing a dog by its forepaw, and by pressing a certain nerve between the first and second claws, had the animal at his mercy. It seemed as if the influence spread from one to the other. A paw in Daniel's hand, the dog would howl and seize the hand as if it would gnaw it; but it ended in nothing worse than a rough fondling, and Daniel was the dog's master. And so, M. de la Galetierre explained, the road was clear when the window bars should be removed. He further informed de Fournier that all sorts of people were permitted to enter the prison; tavern-waiters, vendors of various wares, money-changers, and others. In the daytime the courtyard was a rendezvous for such friends of the prisoners as were not afraid to exhibit an interest in them—which, however, now and then led to their arrest. Benches were placed alongside the grated barrier, and here, all day long, communication with the outer world was maintained, mostly by friendly intercourse, often, however, through malcontents who reviled the prisoners and bade them prepare to embrace "la belle guillotine."

As a conclusion to these particulars, M. de la Galetierre, laying his hand affectionately on de Fournier's shoulder, exclaimed, "And you come just in time to participate in our scheme!"

"And to perish if it fails," he replied.

"In that case we shall only anticipate our end by a day or two. The work of destruction has begun in terrible earnest. Every day the procession to the knife is recruited from the Conciergerie. We were twenty in this narrow room when I was brought into it. With you, we are now fifteen."

"And you sleep here?"

"Don't you see the beautiful straw upon the benches round the cell?"

"Yes, and smell it," said de Fournier.

"My dear friend, you should have seen the hole they thrust me into, festering with filth, the atmosphere thick with the oaths of my companions, who all day long cursed and swore, and diced and smoked black tobacco, and drunk bad brandy supplied by the warders. They requisitioned me at once for two days' supply, and fell upon me when I refused to join in their game."

Further conversation was interrupted by the arrival of supper, which was spread on a long ricketty table, and paid for by the "treasurer," as an aged viscount was called. In these early days of the Revolutionary Tribunal and the reign of the demon Fouquier-Tinville, the regimen was less severe than it was later, though a more rigid discipline followed. At first, while only too often political prisoners were mixed with ordinary malefactors, there was the alleviation of mutual help. The rich were allowed to feed the poor. While the Commune denounced the noblesse for every crime under the sun, they committed the poor in most of the prisons to the tender mercies of the rich, and established within their houses of detention an almost model republic; for here all classes were thrown together. Companions in misfortune, they became also friends in their adversity. Men and women of the upper classes fell in with the hap-hazard economy of the prisons, and adapted themselves to their gruesome surroundings with a grace and fortitude that commanded the respect of their humbler companions, and won even the esteem of many of their bloodthirsty gaolers.

As there were extremes of villainy and virtue in the personal history of the daily story of the Revolution, so, in the prisons, were exhibited the highest qualities of human nature and the lowest, the noblest fortitude and the basest cowardice, the sweetest religious resignation and the wildest despair.

At night de Fournier lay down by the side of his friend; but not to sleep. His fellow-sufferers were more

accustomed to their lot. Some of them had been there for weeks, several for over a month; and, moreover, they laid their heads down upon their hard pillows with a certain hope of escape. Anyhow, they had arrived at that state of mind which calms men and gives them rest. They knew that, one way or the other, their time was short at the Conciergerie. Nothing they could do had been left undone to obtain relief. For many nights they had been lulled to sleep by Daniel's file; and on this night of de Fournier's arrival, Daniel had informed them that he would finish before daylight, and that on the following night they would be free. He never doubted it, and he was a strong man, sanguine as he was strong, and firm in his prophecy of escape; and then he had added, "and once free of this, let no man be brought back alive; as for me, I will be torn to pieces first." And by and by the monotonous burr of his file was heard above the whispers of those who were awake and the hard breathing of those who were asleep; and it was rather useful, Daniel said, that the dogs should tear around now and then and howl. Their music was pleasant to the gaolers, for it told them the dogs were on the watch.

It was a terrible night for de Fournier. He believed that he had not slept a wink, but he had dozed off frequently; his brain active and alive all the time with every kind of distressful invention in which Mathilde needed the help and protection he could not give her, and always with Grébauval mocking him and loading Mathilde with compliments worse than death, and her mother urging her to accept the protection which Grébauval offered her. Worse fancies and more awful possibilities than even these took hold of his imagination, and from groans and sighs brought him at last upon his knees in prayer; and when his friend awoke, with a streak of blurred sunlight coming through the bars of the window that now only held together by a remnant of unfiled iron, de Fournier was asleep, his head between his hands, his knees still bent upon the floor.

"God has been good to him," said de la Galetierre. "For the present his troubles are over; if he were dead

they would be ended altogether. And yet, what a terrible thing it is, the thought of going to sleep never to wake again!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

LAROCHE SURPRISES HIS DAUGHTER AND JAFFRAY ELLICOTT.

"YES," said Marie Bruyset, "I went to the Château yesterday. Monsieur Laroche's name and this little pass" (showing a slip of official-looking paper) "work miracles. I travelled in a military waggon The barrier gate is rebuilt. But the barriers are guarded with much ceremony. Oh, yes, they are open; but for ordinary persons it is not easy to come and go. A patrol of the National Guard was bringing in some prisoners. It is a terrible business."

"It is, indeed," said Jaffray, his eyes intent on Marie's pale face.

"One of the guards—he is sentinel at the first entrance to the grounds—is a good man. He is a friend of Monsieur Joseph. I told you of him once before?"

"Yes," said Jaffray.

"I talked to him in the shadow of the great pillar by the gates with the coat of arms on the top. He had seen Joseph only the day before. The count and mademoiselle had fled. They were at St. Germain. Monsieur de la Galetierre is taken."

"Yes, I know; he is in the Conciergerie."

"He had only been married six months, his wife young and beautiful; she is with the family of Monsieur Bertin."

"The Conciergerie is choked with prisoners; they are bringing them in from other overcharged prisons."

Marie had been at work on a miniature of Robespierre when Jaffray arrived. She was conscious of a certain mysterious surveillance. During her absence, on two occasions, she had observed that one or two of her

papers and portraits had been misplaced, and there was the peculiar odour of tobacco or snuff in the atmosphere of her room. She was becoming careful and diplomatic; had set little traps for her visitor, supposing her suspicions were correct. Latterly she had laid in a sketch or two of notable revolutionists, and she was working upon a likeness of Robespierre with something like feeling; for the physiognomical characteristics of the intellectual wire-puller of the Revolution had fascinated her artistic appreciation.

The half-finished portrait lay upon her knee as she sat by the side of her painting-table, her feet upon a hassock, her eyes now and then turned towards Jaffray, who, with his face in his hands, was leaning with his elbows upon the table, watching every movement of the girl, noting in a dreamy way her dark eyes, her low forehead, a mass of dark hair falling negligently from her mob-cap, her firm brown bosom partly revealed by the loose kerchief or cross-over about her neck, her light-figured print dress hanging in ample folds around her neat and well-proportioned figure, her lips half parted, showing her white teeth as she talked; her whole attitude an unconscious appeal to Jaffray's admiration.

He was better dressed than heretofore; a brooch in his neckerchief, a richly-embroidered vest and a brown short-bodied coat with long skirts and wide blue.lapels; his hair cut short and square across his forehead. His face was boyish as ever, but thinner; his cheeks inclined to hollowness, his grey eyes less bright than when Marie first made his acquaintance, but his manner more self-contained, his lips more firmly compressed; and he looked less like a foreigner, though his complexion was still fair, a marked contrast to Marie's. It was a nervous mouth, a mouth that was sensitive to his thoughts and feelings, and he had the long, shapely hand of an artist, but with the strength of an athlete; a wiry fellow, without an ounce of useless flesh, and looking ten years beyond his age.

"Monsieur Bertin is in hiding, and" (here she turned to Jaffray and spoke almost in a whisper)

"Laroche is on the track of the count; and" (in a lower whisper) "Monsieur Joseph believes the count and mademoiselle are married. But that is his secret."

"Then they are happy," said Jaffray.

"Fugitives from death, and happy?" said Marie.

"Yes," said Jaffray. "Why shall we not go and do likewise?"

"You never take things seriously," said the girl.

"I take my love for you seriously, Marie," said Jaffray, still gazing at her without moving.

"You will only talk about me, when I want you to give your thoughts to persons of importance."

"There is only one person of any importance to me in the whole wide world," Jaffray replied.

"I believe all men say that once in their lives, and think so too, no doubt," said Marie, with a certain archness but a trifle sadly.

"You don't love me," said Jaffray, still without moving, but with his eyes fixed steadily on her face.

"Yes, I do, dear," she said, stretching her left hand, which was nearest him, across the table. He did not notice the action, but went on looking at her, though he smiled and a heightened colour came into his cheeks.

"Do you, really?" he said. "But only a little, eh? Just enough to swear by?"

"You have stolen away from your duties in the very middle of the day, and at I know not what risks, to hear what I did at the Château, and you do nothing but stare at me and say you love me. Jaffray, do you call this devotion to your friends who are in peril of their lives?"

She rose as she spoke, and, placing the miniature of Robespierre upon the table, looked down upon Jaffray, who only lifted his face a little higher to follow her eyes.

"They are married," said Jaffray, "and I envy him his peril."

"And what of her?"

"She loves him."

"And so that we were married, you would not mind the prison and the headsman to follow?"

"Not for myself," said Jaffray. "But for you, Marie, I would die a thousand deaths—or never see you again, if it were to spare you a moment's pain—believe me!"

"I do believe you," she said, as he rose and took her into his arms, "my dear Jaffray!"

"But don't you want to know any more about the Château?" she asked, presently.

They were now sitting side by side near the stove, for the day was chilly. The rain was falling, and the leaves from the one tree in the street were falling with it. Marie's flowers on the window-sill were drooping, and a shiver seemed to go through the room.

"Why, yes, of course, dear," said Jaffray. "Forgive my selfishness, if you can."

"I can forgive you anything," replied the girl, laying her head upon his shoulder.

"In Cherry Valley," said Jaffray, once more lapsing into his dreamy mood, "there was a wide stream of water, and in the fall of the year the valley was red and golden with autumn leaves, rich as any of the colours on your palette, and such flowers! At noon, and in the morning, and at night, everything was so still that it seemed as if the leaves whispered to each other, and the river crept along silently. Oh, such a place for love! I never thought so then, but I was a child; I often see it now, and with you and me, Marie, sitting at a cottage door."

Marie listened to him wonderingly, and found herself trying to realise the picture.

"But there are lovely spots in France, are there not? And Cherry Valley had its massacre. My mother used to talk of her home in England. It was by the sea, on the southern coast, with a history of peace and happiness so long as her memory went back, and it was the dream of their two lives, my father and mother, to get back to their native land; they had taken me out to America an infant, journeying by land and sea for days and weeks and months, but nobody is content in this world; America was beautiful, there was liberty, but its defence cost them their lives. Only in England, even the Deputy Grébauval confesses, is there true

liberty; even Grébauval, and he knows, for, besides his American experiences, he is in constant communication with London, and——"

"Yes?" said Marie, who had drawn her chair a little way apart, though Jaffray held her hand in his.

"That is another matter, I translate his letters; but I was going to say that he asked me only yesterday what my ambition was, and I said, in a moment of frankness,—for I am not always frank, not always honest with him,—that my ambition was to go to England, to the place where I was born; not for the cottage that I believed belonged to me there, not for the few pounds I believed were lying in the local bank, the savings of my parents out yonder in Cherry Valley, but for rest and the opportunity to study."

"To study what?"

"The very question he asked me! I did not answer to study Marie Bruyset when she would be my wife; but I give that answer to you, dear."

Then, suddenly rising to his feet, and brushing his hair from his forehead, and with a smile that sunned his whole face, he said, "Ah, Marie, what am I talking about? Dreaming in the daytime! Always dreaming! But if one did not dream one could only go mad. Don't you dream, Marie?"

"Yes, dear, sometimes."

"My God, if I did not, Marie, I should go out and straightway shoot myself. You are my salvation. I went yesterday to the Conciergerie to see some prisoners and report to Monsieur Grébauval. Cherry Valley, with its dead and dying and its Indian scalpers, was summer weather to the hellish dens and dungeons, the cursing and laughing crowd, the filth, the stench; the women who are ladies insulted, and the women who are strumpets caressed; the everlasting tumbrels gathering their victims for the guillotine, so lately started, so bloody, Marie, so grim, continually fed like a machine—my God! it is awful! You rebuke me well, that I could dare to talk of love and dream of happiness!"

He covered his face with his hands and paced the room, Marie following him, with soothing words, until

once more they sat down to talk, and she took up the thread of her news from the Château.

"The duchess did nothing but weep. She called me her sister, was so humble it made me sad to see her, called herself citoyenne, would not hear of my addressing her even as madame. She says she is only a citoyenne of Paris, wears the revolutionary colours, and has actually changed the furniture of her boudoir. The chairs and mirrors and ornaments of the Louis time are gone, and she is dressed more like a sans-culotte than a duchess. Grébauval goes to see her. The house is in charge of the National Guard and a commissary of police. Madame la duchesse desires the return of her daughter. She denounces the count; hopes she and the count will be taken, for all their sakes. Grébauval will marry mademoiselle, and give the count leave to emigrate. Madame la duchesse says this is the only solution of their troubles. I think she is demented."

"Poor soul! There are women in the Conciergerie who defy death, and accept every degradation with dignity. There are others who go crazy, and men who laugh and men who cry; Madame de Louvet has heard of the horrors that are going on. The patriots take care to talk about them. And the duke, did you see the duke?"

"Only for a moment. He was courtesy itself, wore his velvet with all his former grace; desired his remembrance to any of my royalist clients. I was to tell them that at present he is a prisoner, but that in due time the king will come into his own again and Sansculottism return to its gutter."

"Poor duke! They will have dragged him down to the gutter first," said Jaffray.

"When I left, the guard who knows Joseph, the one at the outer gates, told me that the duke is allowed to walk in the grounds, and that he carries himself with hauteur, though when addressed he speaks pleasantly enough to his gaolers. There are plenty of them about. Some of them spit as he passes. Others make ribald remarks, and call after him 'A bas les aristocrates!'

He does not heed them then, but takes snuff with an air, and sometimes hums a royalist tune. So the days go on; and duke and duchess and half their entourage would be in prison ere this but for Grébauval's professed love for mademoiselle."

"I believe he and Citizen Robespierre exchange confidences about their love affairs," said Jaffray, with a sneer. "There is no secret about Citizen Robespierre's ambition in the direction of the Duc d'Orléans' daughter, none; and Citizen Danton knows that the de Louvets are prisoners at home instead of at the Abbaye or La Force, because Grébauval has a passion for the daughter. They are often closeted for hours together, Grébauval and Robespierre, and more than once I have been in attendance on Grébauval at Citizen Robespierre's lodgings. He is a lynx, this Robespierre!"

Jaffray took up Marie's picture, and held it up before her, with a critical eye.

"Cold, hard, refined, a mouth that might be benevolent if it were not cynical, a ferreting nose that searches, hunts, pries—it is more investigating than his watchful eyes—black, lank hair; his dyspeptic complexion becomes his polished devilry; you have caught the fiendish spirit of his soul, Marie; you feel all the time that you are painting a devil, do you not?"

"Hush, hush!" said Marie, clapping her soft hands over his mouth.

He promptly kissed them, as he said, "But why hush? Simon is under the Vendôme pillar, or was; and Laroche——"

That gentleman walked in on the word, as he might have done in a drama of surprises.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LAROCHE'S DAUGHTER SURPRISES LAROCHE.

"SCARED you, eh?" said Laroche, in his sharp, sententious way.

Jaffray and Marie had been unable to conceal their surprise.

"It's an unfortunate way of mine," continued Laroche, taking Marie's face between his two large hands and kissing her on both cheeks.

"You are welcome," said Marie. "We are not scared, only surprised."

"Bonjour, Monsieur Laroche," said Jaffray.

"Bonjour to you, Citizen Ellicott," said Laroche, looking him mischievously in the face from beneath his bushy eyebrows. "You are a frequent visitor here?"

"Yes, Citizen Laroche," Jaffray replied defiantly, having recovered his self-possession.

"Don't find much to occupy you in the chambers of monsieur le député et juge de la paix?"

"Plenty, Citizen Laroche," said Jaffray.

"I hoped to have found you at your post this morning. A report I had to make to monsieur the Citizen Grébauval would have interested you," said Laroche.

"You found monsieur absent?"

"Yes," said Laroche, "but my report will keep; meanwhile it goes to the Police Department of the Commune."

Laroche, in riding-boots, a whip in his hand, mud-stained breeches, and a cloak over his tight-fitting coat with its flaring lapels, stood in the middle of the room, first turning to one and then to the other.

"Have you seen Madame Laroche, my step-mother, since your return?" Marie asked.

"I came straight here," said Laroche. "Do you take an interest in Madame Laroche?"

"Is it not my duty?" asked Marie.

"How long is it since that made any difference?" he asked, with a snap of his thin lips.

"My friend, the Citizen Ellicott, has frequently accepted madame my step-mother's hospitality."

"And found her most agreeable and kindly," said Jaffray, taking up the cue that Marie gave him.

"Indeed!" said Laroche; "which means?"

"What I say, nothing more," said Jaffray.

"Convenient to the room of mademoiselle, my daughter?" said Laroche. "You know she was my daughter?"

"I have always known it, Citizen Laroche."

"Did you know that she occupied herself in betraying the secrets of the National Police to the enemies of France?"

"Father!" exclaimed Marie.

"No, monsieur, I did not. But I would lay my life on it, whatever she has done has been rightly done."

"You would?" said Laroche. "You may be put to the test."

"Father!" said Marie. "What do you mean?"

"You were at the Château Louvet yesterday?"

"Well, and why not?"

"You are the bearer of a message from the duke. Your conversation was overheard. It was a message to the royalists of Paris."

"A message!" said Marie, scornfully. "'Remember me to my friends, tell them I am a prisoner, but say the king will come to his own again when the sans-culottes return to their gutter'—a mere figure of speech; you cannot call a remark of that kind a message?"

"It has been reported as an act of treason," said Laroche.

"On mademoiselle's part?" asked Jaffray, quickly.

"Yes," said Laroche.

"But, father," said Marie, "I could not help it that the words were spoken."

"You could help hearing them," said Laroche before she had finished her answer.

"How?"

"By remaining at home."

"I had business at the Château."

"What business?"

"Oh, well, if you speak in that way," Marie answered, her eyes flashing, "I went to see the persecuted people and comfort them, to inquire after the count and mademoiselle, to express my sympathy, to hope they may defeat the wolves who howl for their blood. There, Monsieur Laroche, detective of the revolutionary police, that is why I went to the Château de Louvet—make the most of it!"

The customary sang-froid of Laroche gave way before this outbreak. Jaffray, too, stood aghast at Marie's passionate confession. Marie was white to the lips. As she uttered her closing challenge—"make the most of it"—she flung out her right arm contemptuously, as if morally striking Laroche in the face.

The officer of the secret police, after a pause, smiled in a grim, melancholy way, as he remarked, "That is how men and women matriculate for the knife in the Place de la Grêve."

"Monsieur," said Jaffray, stepping forward and laying his hand upon Laroche's shoulder, "you forget that you are speaking to your daughter."

"She forgets that she is speaking to her father," said Laroche.

"No, she remembers," said Marie, seating herself in a chair near the window, where the rain was beating against the narrow panes. "Am I to have no heart, no soul, no friends, no God, because my father has none?"

Laroche looked at Jaffray. Jaffray did not speak.

"Is one's heart to wither and one's blood to become as water," said Marie, getting up and pacing the room, "because one's father is a sleuth-hound of the police, a dog, a coward, who has a heart but gives it away, a soul but lets others play upon it, a love for his child that he consents to stifle and make naught of, because he is the creature of Robespierre, the ferret of Grébauval, the bogie of poor folk who happen to think their souls are their own and dare to say so. I would rather be the dirtiest sans-culotte that dabbled hands in the

blood of the martyred Swiss than such a thing, for other men to use and palter with!"

"My God, Marie!" exclaimed Jaffray, "desist. Oh, be still; you wrong your own heart in saying these things."

"Nay, Jaffray, do not touch me; it is time I spoke. I have been silent too long."

Laroche still stood in the centre of the room, without moving a muscle, except now and then for a nervous twitching of his mouth.

"It is because I know him," she went on, pausing to confront her father, but still speaking to Jaffray; "it is because I know that God gave him a good heart, it is because I know that he loves me, that he has a capacity for kindness, that his austerity is mostly put on, that he tears his heart in what he conceives to be sacrifices to duty which are sacrifices of his better nature; because I know that they flatter him at the Palais de Justice, the fiends who cut throats in the name of Liberty and kill the Church's priesthood to a murderous litany, with filthy rites and wantons for priestesses."

"Marie, forbear!" said Jaffray, shocked to witness the passion and hear the wild words of the woman he loved.

"That is all I have to say, father," she said, flinging her arms down by her side, her voice gradually becoming tender. "Those are all the bitter words I can think of to let you know how I feel about the work you are doing. And now, call in your spies and have me taken away. But know that I shall die believing in the goodness of your heart this many a year, the sincerity of your remorse for the life you led my mother, and the truth of the love that lies deep in your breast for your most unhappy daughter."

Thereupon she rocked to and fro as though she would fall, and Laroche opening his arms, she fell into them, white as her linen cross-over.

"I am all you say," came from the trembling lips of Laroche, one by one, like drops of agony; "all, but not for myself—for France."

Then, suddenly looking down into her white face, he exclaimed, "Help, monsieur! Marie, what is it?"

"She has only fainted, I hope," said Jaffray. "Let us carry her to her bed."

"I have seen women faint, and men," said Laroche, catching at his breath as one in pain; "but this is death."

"Nay, don't be alarmed," said Jaffray. "Let me draw the curtains and open the window; and here is water—permit me."

Jaffray sprinkled water in Marie's face, and raised her to a sitting position so that the wind from the window might reach her.

"Perhaps it were well that you called Madame Laroche," said Jaffray.

"I will not leave her," said Laroche.

"Place your arm under her head," said Jaffray; "bathe her lips, so; open her dress, use a little more water, so. I will fetch madame."

Laroche bathed her lips, and kissed them; and presently his tears fell heavily upon her face. He had not wept so long as he could remember.

"My darling, my child!—my cruel child,—my child-judge who condemns me, who calls me wolf and coward.—Marie. Dieu! what shall I do if she is dead?"

The wind sighed in at the window, and the curtain flapped against his face. He started as if the hand of death had touched him.

"Have mercy, Jésu!" he said. "Mother of God, forgive me! Marie, it is true I love you. But oh, why will you run into danger? Why will you risk your life for your country's enemies? You know better. I know that. Marie! My own Marie! Mon Dieu, she moves. Thank heaven, she is not dead!"

Then, with a sickening feeling, he turned aside to ask himself, "What will she say when she knows what I have done this day?"

Madame and Jaffray entered the room.

"She lives," said Laroche.

"Marie!" said Jaffray, as she opened her eyes.

"My dear," said madame, a thick-hipped, round-faced, genial French good-wife, "my dear, let me lift you to a chair."

Jaffray moved aside. Laroche stood with bowed head and eyes all wet, a sorry picture of "a sleuth-hound of the revolutionary police."

"A little eau-de-vie," said madame, producing a small phial and a glass of water and administering the restorative with a gentle, if fat, square hand.

Marie sipped the liquor, and looked around her with a vaguely inquiring expression in her eyes.

"You have been sick," said madame. "Your father came upon you suddenly; he shouldn't, but he don't mean no harm; I know him."

Laroche took a large-coloured handkerchief from his breast-pocket and mopped his face.

"Your father, my love, ain't half so bad as he makes out."

Jaffray began to smile.

"I've heard him threaten most awful, but he don't mean it. What have he been a-saying to you, my dear?"

"Nothing," said Marie, in a very low voice. "It is I who have been talking."

"Thank God, she is speaking," said Laroche to himself. "But what will she say when she knows all? I think I will go."

"Oh, you've been talking to him—for his good, I hope. Here he has been away I don't know how long, and he hasn't a word to say to his wife, good, bad, or indifferent; but he don't mean it, dear, not he."

"My dear Suzanne, I beg your pardon," said Laroche, coming forward. "How do you do?"

"I'm very well," said madame, accepting his salute. "You don't look happy."

"No; Marie has made me unhappy."

"Hope it'll do you good, and her, too," said madame. "You wants to understand each other properly, that's all," and she looked round with a twinkle in her round blue eyes at Jaffray. "I'm sure I see no objection to the Citizen Ellicott coming a-courting; and what I say is that let it be a match and a marriage, the sooner the better."

Jaffray looked at Marie, and the colour came into the girl's cheeks.

"That's it; now she's mending, a little drop more eau-de-vie."

Marie opened her lips, and the good woman pressed the glass to them.

"After that a little soup, and then lie down for an hour, and you'll never know there has been anything the matter."

"Shall you have me taken to prison?" Marie asked, turning to her father.

"Taken to prison!" said madame, looking round the room at everybody and everything. "God forbid!"

"Amen, amen!" said Laroche.

"You forgive me?" said Marie, looking at him.

"Yes," said Laroche; "it's the last time?"

"The last time I will ever upbraid you? Yes, the very last."

"Whatever I do? or have done?"

"Yes," said Marie; "but——"

"No buts," said Laroche. "And this young man, does he desire to wed you?"

"I have asked her to permit me to speak to you upon the subject," said Jaffray.

"Not now; oh, not now," said Marie. "You did not know me then. Au revoir, Jaffray. I have a temper; it makes me mad, but come again to-morrow."

"As you wish, dear, said Jaffray, kissing her hand. "Bonjour, monsieur; bonjour, madame."

"Pardon, Citizen Ellicott," said Laroche, "if Marie permits, I will meet you here to-morrow at this time; shall it be so?"

"Yes, father," said Marie.

Jaffray bowed, and once more proceeded to take his leave.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE PALAIS DE JUSTICE.

"I WILL accompany you, citizen, my young friend," said Laroche. "I think we are walking the same way."

"To the Palais de Justice?"

"Yes," said Laroche, who saluted his wife and Marie, and followed Jaffray along the passage and down the staircase, which Jaffray, on their first acquaintance, had traversed at a break-neck rate, that had not, however, saved him from the clutches of Simon the printer, now Simon no more, rival or revolutionary, but a lump of clay bundled into a pit with many other lumps of useless flesh, sacrifices to a new tyranny that had risen up against an older despotism.

"Citizen," said Laroche, "friend I may call you, since you desire to become my son-in-law, do you think I have deserved my daughter's hard words?"

"She did not mean all she said."

"Do you think I deserved half she said?"

"Why, yes, I do, since you insist."

"Half?"

"I said half, Citizen Laroche; but I am sorry to condemn you."

"You condemn me?"

"I do."

"You are a foreigner; you don't know what it is to love France."

"I know what it is for men to make love of France an excuse for hatred of humanity."

"Duty is above all things," said Laroche, with compressed lips and his old sternness of manner.

"What is duty? To murder a man because he is not of your opinion?" said Jaffray, his frank face flushed as he turned upon the police official.

"If he is wrong and endangers the nation's safety, it is not murder, Monsieur l'Anglais, it is justice."

"Very well," said Jaffray, "have it so. We shall never agree about that, Citizen Laroche, premier agent of the Revolutionary Police."

"Have a care," said Laroche, suddenly laying his hand upon the young fellow's arm. "If I permit my daughter's hard words, I do not allow a similar liberty to you."

"You allow, monsieur!" said Jaffray, defiantly. "But there, you and I must not quarrel, since you are to be my father-in-law. How, in heaven's name, came you to be father to such an angel!"

"You love her?" said Laroche, controlling himself with an effort, and, while angry with Jaffray's open sneer at him, pleased with the lad's frank admiration of his child.

"Love her! Yes, God knows! And would love her, were she a thousand times your daughter."

"And you think I deserved her hard words?"

"I have said what I think."

"Do you think I love her?"

"Yes, so far as you are capable of loving anything."

"You despise me," said Laroche, suddenly. "Beware; a wild beast loves its offspring, but——"

"It's a wild beast all the same, eh?" said Jaffray, with a recklessness that was not altogether well-judged; but youth is fearless.

"And you think you love the daughter, while you despise her father?"

"I never think of you as her father."

"But she does—she does; you have seen that. And now, listen, and lay to heart what I am going to tell you."

They were now within the grim shadow of the Palais de Justice. Laroche drew him aside, in a niche of the Pont-Neuf, close by the broken statue of Henri IV.

"Have you heard my daughter speak of one Mathilde Louvet, the daughter of Citoyenne Louvet, *ci-devant* duchess? You don't answer. You think I want information. I will tell you more than you know; and all

you know, I know. I love my daughter like a wild beast, you say——"

"I did not say that, monsieur," replied Jaffray.

"No matter; it amounted to that. Judge then how much I sacrifice to duty and to France. Yesterday I lodged at the Abbaye, the Citoyenne Mathilde Louvet, *ci-devant* Countess Fournier."

"What?" exclaimed Jaffray, starting back.

"They had been married two days before I arrested her and her husband."

"Fiend!" said Jaffray.

"Your friend, the *ci-devant* count, Citizen Fournier, is in charge of the concierge of the Palais de Justice."

Jaffray turned his face helplessly towards the grim towers of the great prison.

"Country first," said Laroche, his face lighting up with a glow of pride that almost made it handsome spite of his fanaticism; "wife and child, love, and home next. It was so in the great days of ancient Rome; France to-day is rivalling ancient Rome."

"In her worst days," said Jaffray, sick at heart, as he kept his eyes fixed upon the stony face of the Conciergerie, that might well have had Dante's inscription at the gates of the Inferno written in letters of blood across its grim entrance, around which a crowd of weird and obscene-looking creatures were assembled, yearning for blood and tears, as the tenth tumbrel of the day rumbled forth amidst a yell worthy of Goethe's Brocken Festival.

"Au revoir, Citizen Ellicott," said Laroche, still with something of the ecstasy of a hot fanaticism in the expression of his otherwise hard face. "We meet to-morrow; you will make my peace with Marie; your reward shall be my consent to her betrothal."

With no more words Laroche drew his cape about him, brushed the dust from his boots with the lash of his riding-whip, and with a firm and resolute gait walked towards the Palais de Justice.

Jaffray stood watching him, with mingled feelings of indignation, sorrow, and amazement. His way to the Grébauval bureau was by a street that passed round at

the back of the prison. He did not move until he had seen Laroche enter the gates leading to the Conciergerie, the sentinels on duty making way for him, and the crowd cheering him as his name was circulated among them—"the famous Laroche, of the Secret Police."

"Alas, poor de Fournier! unhappy countess!" said Jaffray, walking to his duties with bent head and tearful eyes. "It will break Marie's heart. I must see the count."

The thought of being able to render his secret friend some service quickened his footsteps.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF.

To-morrow came. But it was not the to-morrow which Jaffray Ellicott had looked for. It was to have given family endorsement to his engagement with Marie Bruyset. Laroche had invited himself to be present on the occasion. He could not have any hostile intention. Jaffray noticed that Laroche had asked permission to come with an unusual and strange submissiveness of manner. The proposed union had already the approval of Madame Laroche. He and Marie had loved each other from that first encounter when her garret had become, as he had since felt, the anteroom to his great good fortune.

To-morrow! Notwithstanding the agonising news with which Laroche had loaded his heart, the young fellow had still looked forward to the to-morrow with a secret hope of happiness. At all events he would have more right than ever to console his sweetheart, and surely his new position would enable him, in any fierce emergency, to help Marie's friends and patrons.

To-morrow! Well, it came; but it found Marie Bruyset out of humour for all considerations of self.

Before Jaffray's arrival she had received her father without an upbraiding word; but there was a silent scornfulness in her manner that cut him deeper than words.

"It was my duty," he said, apologising for his successful capture of de Fournier and Mathilde.

"So you say," Marie replied, her face pale, her eyes feverishly bright.

"I am not responsible for the orders of the Commune."

"No; you are not a member of the Municipality, nor is your Citizen Robespierre; he is not even a member of the Convention."

"That is true."

"Yet he wields the powers of both."

"He is a great man, a prophet."

"It is not, then, necessary to be a member of the Municipality to exercise a power of life and death," said Marie, "and duty does not compel a free man to be a mere instrument of evil."

"It is no good discussing that, Marie."

"No, I suppose not. He that lives by the sword shall die by the sword; is that not a scriptural ordinance?" she asked.

"Ordinance or prophecy," said Laroche, "it is true, I dare say."

"Then have you no fear?"

"None."

"Has Grébauval no fear?"

"None, I should say."

"Does he think God sleeps?"

"No; he thinks God has awakened. If they die by the sword who live by it, there should be many just deaths before the year is out, and there will be."

"And David slew Goliath with a sling and a stone," continued Marie, as if she had only partly heard her father's reply. "Do you think Robespierre and Marat, and Danton and Fouquier-Tinville, and the snake Grébauval will escape the sling of God's vengeance."

"I think they will," said Laroche, somewhat satirically.

"We shall see," said Marie; "we shall see. You take pains to warn me; be warned yourself, father—for you are my father, God help me!"

Marie turned her bright eyes upon Laroche, with what seemed to him an almost unearthly expression, and passed where he stood to open the door to Jaffray.

"Bonjour, Citizen Ellicott," said Laroche, going to the window and drawing the curtain aside, that he might give his mind the freedom of a large outlook. The towers of the Palais de Justice stood out against the sky.

Jaffray kissed Marie's hand silently. He could see that she knew what had happened. She had not yet, however, felt the strange mysterious touch of greater calamities to come, a weird foreboding of some mysterious peril that pervaded all Paris; the kind of foreboding that might, perchance, have been felt in Pompeii before the eruption of the burning mountain.

"Marie is not well," said Laroche; "she grieves because she cannot stop the hand of Time."

"Not Time, father," Marie answered. "You call tyranny, persecution, assassination, by every other name but their right ones. What has Time to do with the malice of Grébauval and the devilry of Marat? Time would register deeds of mercy just as surely as it will register your own deeds of duty, father."

Every time Marie used the word father she emphasised it in a way that wounded Laroche, but only to stimulate his obstinate sense of his own self-sacrificing fulfilment of the duties of his office and his loyalty to France.

"Patience, dear friend," said Jaffray. "Madame Mathilde is patient, and she has more need of patience than we have."

"You have heard of her?"

"Yes, an hour ago. She is permitted the companionship of her maid. Her mother is also to have an interview with her."

"Yes?" said Marie. "Go on, you have more to tell."

"She is to be allowed a change of clothes, and other luxuries."

"Luxuries!" said Marie, with a sigh.

"Yes, dear friend; these are luxuries hardly permitted to the king and queen."

"Pardon," said Laroche, "that is not so. The persons you call king and queen have all they desire, and are attended by their own servants."

"And mocked and scoffed at by yours," said Marie, without apparent anger, her manner calm, but every word clean cut and uttered by lips that in repose were pressed tightly together.

"They had mocked the people long enough."

"Do you know the sort of chamber they gave the king? I will tell you. 'You were used to gilt ceilings,' said the Municipal Guard; 'now see how we lodge the assassins of the people.' That is what you call this poor, mild, gentle king, who has not the heart to kill a fly, let alone the people he loves."

"Silence!" exclaimed Laroche. "Silence, you must not say these things."

"They showed him to a low room with a bed and three chairs, and the bed was infested with vermin."

"Silence, I say!" hissed Laroche, approaching Marie, who stood before him resolute and motionless.

"Yes," she went on, "there was more furniture; there were pictures. Yes, dear father, your colleagues who imprison kings appreciated the artistic taste of royalty, and they had decorated the walls with engravings, so filthy, so immoral, that the poor king removed them himself; 'I cannot allow such things to be seen by my daughter'—you see the king loves his daughter; patriots and agents of police are superior to such trivial humanities."

"Perhaps Capet's daughter cares for her father," said Laroche; "you never cared for me."

"Don't let us quarrel, dear Monsieur Laroche," said Jaffray, coming between father and daughter, with his hand raised in a conciliatory way. "Marie is much distressed. You have done your duty, no doubt, monsieur; that accomplished, you can use your good influence for your daughter's friends."

"I have done what I could."

"But you arrested them," said Marie.

"I made the way smooth for them," replied Laroche.

"But you hunted them down," said Marie.

"I was even thanked by Citizen Fournier for the consideration I showed him and his wife."

"But you were their captor; otherwise they might be free."

"Not so; others would have taken them, as others have taken the Bertins," said Laroche.

"The Bertins, too!" exclaimed Marie, her hand upon her heart.

"And as others will take the Louvets," said Laroche, his face hardening; "and as others will take all the enemies of France that are leagued with the foreign foe now marching upon Paris; yes, upon Paris."

"And the de Louvets?" said Marie. "Did you say the de Louvets?"

"You have said it," replied Laroche.

"Their friend, Monsieur de la Galetierre, too?" asked Marie.

"Yes, but no prisoner of mine."

"No, you had a higher ambition, I know," said Marie. "And you dare to say you love your daughter."

"The time may come when that love will be swallowed up in the patriot's love of his country," replied Laroche, with a fervency that brought the colour into his inflexible countenance.

"For God's sake!" said Jaffray, "don't make it difficult for you to be reconciled. My dear Marie, oh, my friend, don't aggravate your father."

"Bonsoir," said Laroche, abruptly, "bonsoir. If I am only an agent of police in my daughter's eyes, why, *ventre bleu!* I will stick to my trade. Bonsoir!"

CHAPTER XXX.

LAROCHE AT HOME.

"BONSOIR," said Marie, after a pause while she and Jaffray listened to the determined tread of Laroche's footsteps on the stairs. Jaffray noticed that they paused at his own floor. He had not gone straight away to the bureau of the secret police, as Jaffray had feared he would. If he cooled his anger at home, there might be some hope of reconciliation.

"You will bring that young woman to the scaffold, among you," said Laroche to his wife.

"Bless me, why? The scaffold!" said his humble partner, with an iron in her hand, the heat of which she was testing at her fat, rosy cheek.

"What are you ironing?"

"Your shirts," said madame.

"Is it very hot, that iron?"

"Not too hot. What's the matter with you?"

"The iron of indignant Paris will go over the enemies of France with a heat that will consume them," said Laroche, flinging himself into a chair, "and not Robespierre himself can cool it; and yet she thinks I can control the furnace."

"I don't know what you're talking about," said madame, running the iron over Laroche's linen.

"You never do," said Laroche. "Put down your iron, and give me some wine."

Madame placed the iron in the stove, rubbed her fat hands upon a towel, carried her buxom self to a sideboard and brought forth a bottle of red wine, which she opened and handed to Laroche with the complaisance of a paid waitress.

"She is mad, that daughter of mine," he said, having emptied the goblet which his wife had filled.

"Your daughter is stubborn, like you," said Madame Laroche.

"Me stubborn!"

"Yes; obstinate as a winter cough compared with such as me."

"Compared with such as you!" said Laroche. "You were made to iron clothes and cook omelettes, and you do both well; and——"

"Thank you. I suppose if I went into the streets, with a sword by my side and a cockade in my cap, and shouted myself hoarse yelling the Carmagnole, you'd think something of me?"

"*Sacré nom du diable*, no, I shouldn't!" exclaimed Laroche.

"But you want your daughter to run with your sans-culotte crew?"

"No, I don't," said Laroche. "*Mais, Dieu*, I can't have a traitor under my roof, can I? A reviler of the people? An enemy to the Revolution? An upholder of Veto. Besides——"

He did not finish the sentence, but got up and tramped about the room. Madame filled his goblet again. He emptied it mechanically. Then she took from a shelf a clay pipe, and filled it with tobacco and laid it on the arm of his chair.

"Besides," he said, after a pause, "she may slip through my fingers; if that man Simon the printer had lived, he would have denounced her. Do you think I could save her if she were brought before the Committee? Not I, nor twenty Laroches. Do you think she would hold her tongue? Not she. *Mon Dieu*, she would talk her head off her shoulders; and what could I do? Nothing, nothing!"

"You don't go on like this before the Committee yourself?" said madame. "You keep your temper there?"

"*Dieu!* I have to. It does me good to let it speed at home."

"I don't matter, do I? They don't know you, the wise 'uns at the Palais; I do, you're like the rest; I saw your Marat and your Citizen Danton one day; cowards both, cowards, Laroche, one day, if their turn comes——"

"Suzanne, are you mad, too!" exclaimed Laroche. "You are getting your opinions from Marie's garret? Yes, I see you are!"

"No, I'm not; I get them from you," said madame, smiling with her large blue eyes. "You think I'm a fool, Laroche; I'm not. You tell me many things, but I get my opinions from what you don't say."

"Then listen to what I do say. Sit down. Have a drink. I've never been savage to you, have I?"

"No; considering what you are, you've been a good husband. And here's good fortune to you!"

Madame touched his cup with hers, and he added, "To you, also; Suzanne, I do believe you're the only true friend I have in the world."

"No other woman?" she said, laughing.

"No other woman," he said, without smiling; "and no man either."

"Not Citizen Grébauval?" said madame; "not Citizen Robespierre?"

"Don't ask questions," Laroche replied, taking up his pipe, which she lighted for him.

"No," he said, after a whiff or two, "I can't smoke."

"What is it? Something's mortal wrong?"

"Don't you feel it in the air?" he said. "I do. If they come to this house—a domiciliary visit—though you are my wife, be discreet. Warn our neighbours on every floor. And Marie. You like her. She is fond of you. A word, a look, a picture in the wrong place, a trifle may ruin her, ruin us all. Her heart is not with me, nor with you, nor with France. *Mais, mon Dieu,* she is my daughter, and I would not have her swept into La Force or the Abbaye, or carried to the Hôtel de Ville. Hold her back! Still her tongue. Danton, at the bar of the Convention, lighted the train. It is burning, slowly but surely; and in the meantime the victims are being gathered in, sacrifices on the altar of France. Like the prophet of old, I am ready to offer up my own flesh and blood; but oh, *mon Dieu,* I pray for a substitute. You know me, Suzanne. I am putty in Marie's hands, but I can be adamant where duty is concerned. We have parted. I can do no more with

her. You can. I leave her to you. I must go now."

"Laroche," said the woman, who was only good enough to be a housekeeper, "you don't often give me your confidence; but you keep your devilries, whatever they be, for others, so I'm content. I get my housekeeping money regular, and you ain't mean; so, seeing as it's uncommon to ask me to help you, why, of course I'll do it; but couldn't you spare a word or two now and then for my own sake, just what they calls a bit of domestic talk, husband and wife, and——"

"Don't make a fool of yourself, Suzanne. Give me a kiss, and do what I tell you."

She suffered herself to be kissed. They were hard lips that touched hers, and Laroche's embrace was no less cold than formal, but it was an embrace; and when he had buttoned his coat and stuffed his pistols into his pocket, he took her fat hand and bent over it with a respectful, if not a courtly air, and kissed it; saying as he went out, "Suzanne, I like you more than you think."

"You may easily do that," she said to herself, as she closed the door upon him.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ON THE EVE OF THE MASSACRES OF SEPTEMBER.

LAROCHE went straight to the Ministry of Justice. He was late. Robespierre, Danton, Grébauval, and the rest, however, needed no apology from their devoted agent of police.

Encouraged the day before by shouts of "Vive la Commune!" excited by cries of "Vivent nos bons Commissaires!" from a thousand croaking throats, they had already framed the list of proscriptions; and Laroche was in time to accompany them to the Assembly, where

Danton and his colleagues appeared to give an account of the measures taken to ensure the public safety.

"A number of the people," said Danton, his voice and manner dominating the paralysed legislature and delighting the galleries, "a number of the people has already set out for the frontiers, another is engaged in digging our entrenchments; the third, armed with pikes, will defend the interior of the city."

The galleries cheered, and shouted "Vive la Commune!"

"But this is not enough," went on the audacious Communist. "You must send emissaries and couriers to rouse all France to imitate the example of the devoted capital; we must pass a decree, by which every citizen shall be obliged, under pain of death, to serve in person against the common enemy."

He was still speaking when the tocsin startled the general ear, followed by discharges of artillery.

"It is not the sound of alarm that you hear," he said, his voice ringing out like a trumpet, defiant and powerful: "it is the signal to advance against your enemies; to conquer, to crush them! What is required?" he asked, looking round upon the Assembly with flashing and murderous eyes, and pronouncing the reply, which rings like a death-knell through every history of the Revolution. "Boldness, boldness, boldness! And France is saved!" Not alone his words, but his thunderous voice "produced," to quote an eloquent record of the time, "the most appalling impression, and a decree of the Assembly was immediately proclaimed, announcing urgent danger to the Commonwealth, and commanding all the citizens to repair, armed, to their several posts as soon as the cannon of alarm should be heard, and appointing a committee of twelve, with absolute power, to concur with the executive, of which Danton was the head, in the measures necessary for the public safety."

Thus were the massacres of September the 2d inaugurated. The echoes of the din in the streets, the clash of the tocsin, the reverberations of cannon, penetrated the Conciergerie. Mathilde heard the clamour at the Abbaye. At the Temple the king and queen

wondered at it, and feared. But what impressed the prisoners in the gaols more than the noise, was the anxious looks of their gaolers, the hurried conferences of officials. At the Conciergerie knives were removed from the dinner-tables, and everything that could be used for defence or offence was taken away from the cells.

At night, in the barred room of the Fourteen, the prisoners were conscious of a deathly stillness. Even the dogs in the courtyard cease to bark. They howled piteously, as if they had seen some unnatural apparition. Now and then one of them would set up a wild yell, soon subsiding into a low growl.

The savage animals in the little yard beneath the window were regaled with the meat of half a dozen dishes of the day's dinner, and Daniel cooed to them in soft, soothing tones as he filed at the last bar. He had said, when he began work on this last night, "Friends, something tells me that if we are not out before the dawn we are doomed." By one o'clock every bar was removed, and the way was open. An agreed signal was given to the friends who had kept watch on the quay and had slept in doorways and down by the river night after night, amongst them de la Galetierre's brave wife.

The last bar removed, the eight were distributed as weapons. Soon after dinner, and while there was plenty of light, the order of precedence in leaving had been settled by ballot. Each man knew his place. De Fournier was last in the rank, de la Galetierre first; but it was decided to give this position to Daniel because of his control over the dogs.

They had pushed a table beneath the window; only a chair added was necessary for them to reach the opening, from which the evening breeze now blew gratefully into the fetid room.

With breathless anxiety they watched Daniel disappear. They had no cause to fear the two sentinel dogs. The file which Daniel had been able to conceal about his person all through his imprisonment, was a sharp-pointed tool, a knife as well as a file, the sort of imple-

ment that in after years Colonel Bowie, the American, selected for the weapon that is known by his name.

Fondling the first dog that answered his call, Daniel slew it with a deadly home-thrust; and quickly laid upon its carcase that of its fierce companion.

One after another, the men passed safely through the aperture; one after another, calmly and in perfect order, de Fournier awaiting his turn.

Simultaneously with these escapes the générale beat, the tocsin sounded, the citizens began their march to the frontiers; and the city was thus left to the mercy of the Commune's band of assassins, three hundred demons in human shape, assembled at the Hôtel de Ville, who were rendered more ferocious by libations of ardent spirits, their pockets filled with blood money. They, and the multitude that accompanied them, were addressed in wild words of encouragement by Robespierre, Collot d'Herbois, and Billaud-Marennes, while Grébauval and Laroche looked on. "A mort les aristocrates!" "A mort les prisonniers!" "Vive la Commune!" shouted the hired murderers, brandishing their weapons. "Magnanimous people," said Collot d'Herbois, "you march to glory!" "A l'Abbaye!" was the fierce response; "A la Conciergerie! A la Force! A l'Hôtel de Ville!" "First to the Abbaye," said a powerful ruffian, as hideous as Marat himself. "Yes. To the Abbaye!" shouted the rest, and off they started, howling death to priests and prisoners, who encumbered the earth.

As if misfortune was still holding de Fournier with a deadly grip, no sooner did he mount the chair to quit the prison, than, broken with the already heavy strain it had borne, it gave way, table and all, prostrating him upon the floor. He lay there for a few minutes, the dogs in the outer yard howling dismally. Perhaps they smelt the blood of their dead companions. Presently he gathered himself up, felt himself all over.

"No bones broken," he said, "no blood drawn; thank God for that, at all events. I must reach the window, if I crawl up the wall," and he began to feel for the chair; at which moment the bar of the door was

stealthily drawn, and someone entered. Groping for anything that could be used as a weapon, de Fournier found the leg of the chair.

"De Fournier," said some one, in a low whisper, "are you asleep?"

With a full knowledge of the massacre that was to take place early that morning in all the prisons of France, Robespierre, Danton, and other members of the Committee of Twelve issued private orders of release for certain persons whom they desired to save or had been bribed to protect, or for whom they might have felt some sense of pity—at least, they are entitled to this amount of human credit.

Jaffray, by means of an order surreptitiously obtained, and through personal influence with the gaoler of the room in which de Fournier was confined, had come to remove him to safer quarters, and, if possible, to release him, though there were still difficulties in the way of his enlargement which would require skill and audacity to overcome.

"Do I know that voice?" said de Fournier, after a moment.

"I am Jaffray Ellicott," was the reply, at the same time producing from beneath his coat a small lantern.

"God bless you!" said de Fournier, embracing him.

"Alone?" said Jaffray. "Alone?"

"Yes; the others have escaped. I have been unfortunate, you see," and Jaffray turned the light upon the broken chair.

"Quick then," said Jaffray; "that is your best way now; quick," and in a few minutes it was possible for de Fournier to mount.

"And you?" he said.

"Don't mind me. I came to help. Begone, as fast as you may; you don't know the peril of this hour. Where shall you make for?"

"My own hôtel," said de Fournier.

"No, no; not to-night."

"I know a safe way in and a good hiding-place."

"Not to-night," said Jaffray. "Do you know the Rue de la Monnaie?"

"Yes."

"The third turning down, by the left, you will see a deep passage-way, with a lantern hung over the arch?"

"Yes; I can find it."

"Enter; on the right there is a dark passage; await me there. Here are pistols; I will join you. Every scoundrel in Paris will be too busy about the prisons and in the richer quarters to disturb you; wait for me. Hush! Shall you know this whistle?"

Jaffray gave a low peculiar whistle.

"Yes."

"In half an hour you shall hear it, under the arch-way with the lantern."

"Au revoir!" said de Fournier, and disappeared.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MIDNIGHT VISITORS AT THE ABBAYE.

FROM a troubled sleep, soon after midnight, Mathilde was awakened by the stealthy unlocking of the door of her cell, and the entrance of the warder, with a lantern.

"Who is there?" she asked, pulling the scanty bed-clothes around her, and starting up.

"It is I, the gaoler."

"What is the matter?" exclaimed Mathilde's waiting-woman.

Mathilde had been immured in a cell on an upper floor of the Abbaye, overlooking the inner court of the prison. Her waiting-woman was permitted to sleep with her. The cell was more than ordinarily large. It was, however, furnished in the most meagre way, though the gaoler had more than once called the Citoyenne Louvet's attention to the sumptuous manner in which she was lodged.

"There is a messenger to see you," said the gaoler. "Get up and dress."

"Who is he? Why is he here at this time?" asked Mathilde.

"You are to be removed," the gaoler replied.

"We prefer to remain where we are until it is daylight," said Mathilde.

"And if you do," said a second voice, as another man entered and closed the door, "your sleep will only be interrupted once, for evermore."

"Mon Dieu! Have mercy!" said the waiting-woman, slipping from her bed, and huddling on part of her clothes in a corner where the lantern cast no light.

"You mean that we are to be murdered?" said Mathilde, with all the courage she could command.

"I have a carriage awaiting you, and can secure your safe departure from the Abbaye. Get up and dress."

"I know your voice," said Mathilde.

"I am Laroche," replied the man.

"Laroche, the spy, the police agent, the——"

"Spare your words and your time," said Laroche. "I am here to save you."

"From what?"

"Listen!"

A distant murmur was heard, with sharp cries above the lower tones.

"What is it?"

"Listen," said Laroche, going to the window, unfastening the latch, and swinging it free of the iron bars.

The sound came nearer. It was the voice of the raging multitude.

"It will stop in a few minutes at the outer gates. They are bringing the priests from the Hôtel de Ville."

"Madame, get up and dress," said the gaoler. "Citizen Laroche can alone save you from the fate of these unhappy men. I am no assassin myself, only a gaoler, and you have paid me well for such service as I have rendered you. Get up, madame. Mon Dieu, if you do not, I will make you, for your own sake, though your death is no affair of mine."

"Do, dear madame, get up, if you please," said the waiting-woman. "I am already dressed."

"Then leave us," said Mathilde.

"It is best that one of us remain," said Laroche. "Take the lantern; I will stand by the window."

"And I will wait without," said the warder, placing himself in the corridor.

Mathilde still hesitated.

"Nay, madame," said Laroche; "the person you call queen has to make her toilette in the presence of a National Guard; I am the father of Marie."

Mathilde made no further reply, but arose, and with the help of her waiting-woman dressed herself, and in a few minutes said she was at monsieur's command.

"You have some things you wish to take away, eh?"

"Yes, yes," said the waiting-woman.

"Pack them quickly. We have already wasted precious minutes. Listen!"

The murmurs had become groans, the sharper tones yells and howls such as wolves might make; but they were men's voices, mingled with the screams and laughter of women. The commotion no longer moved. It no longer marched; it was stationary.

Then there was a crashing of doors, a wild hooting, penetrated by the cries of men in despair, and a sudden burst of people into the courtyard beneath the barred window of Mathilde's cell; a bellowing, fighting, cursing, yelling mob, with torches and pikes and swords, and among them a company of priests, who were being murdered, with every kind of barbarity.

Above the din could be heard a rasping, strident voice. It was the voice of poor Pierre Grappin's wife, nick-named Angélique. She was the embodiment of all that was gruesome and fanatical in the scene of riot and slaughter.

"The Lord shall swallow them up in His wrath!" she shouted; and the fiends about her yelled, and struck at their unarmed victims.

Most prominent among the murderers was the insurgent Maillard, who commanded the assailants at the taking of the Bastille, and on the end of his pike pushed the message of the Swiss ensign over to the Gardes Françaises, offering to capitulate on condition that the

lives of the garrison were saved, and returned to them the written words of the officers, Elie and Hullin, that "On the honour of French soldiers, no injury shall be done you." But honour and humanity, and all the virtues, seemed to have passed from the persecutors to the persecuted, and the former were in full possession of the country.

When the priests were notified of their removal from the Hôtel de Ville, some of them believed they were to be liberated. None of them but felt that they were going to better quarters; and so, one hopes, they really were. It was, meanwhile, but a poor sequel to their hopes and prayers, to fall in detail before the pikes and sabres of Maillard and his devilish horde. To go down, gashed by this man and stabbed by the other, without a single defending arm, and no blessing asked of officiating brother, no offence committed, save in so far as loyalty to the Throne and duty to the Church were crimes, was a bitter ending, though it has been justified by some writers as the result of unholy panderings to the vices of the rich and the debaucheries of royalty.

"They shall be cut down like the grass!" chanted Angélique, from her pulpit of the mutilated dead.

"They shall!" yelled the assassins, hunting the wretched priests to and fro, those dying easiest who made no attempts to ward off the blows of sabres and the thrusts of pikes.

Every minute fresh victims were dragged into the courtyard from the carriages in which the prisoners had been brought from their miserable den in the Hôtel de Ville.

Mathilde had crept to the window. The phantasmagoria of savagery for a moment seemed to blind her. It was a hideous dance of death. Angélique was conducting the music of it with her flag. The music was a yapping like the howl of bloodhounds, a screech, a yell, a growl, and a shout of hellish laughter, with a diapason of lament and despair, a wailing undertone to the fiendish chorus. Fascinated and horrified, Mathilde gripped Laroche's arm. She tried to turn her head away from the scene. But her eyes held to the awful

vision. Her heart beat violently. Laroche compressed his thin lips, and stood stiffly up. Happily for the waiting-woman, she had busied herself with packing a small valise which she had been allowed to bring into the prison, and the gaoler had returned to take it and to say, "Mon Dieu, be quick; the entire prison is to be searched."

"Come," said Laroche; "come."

"I cannot move," said Mathilde. "Lead me, monsieur; hold me up."

Laroche took her by the arm. She leaned against him for support.

"I shall be better presently."

"Permit me," said Laroche; and he encircled her waist with his left arm. "Have no fear."

"Are you ready?" the gaoler asked.

"Yes," said Laroche; and the cell-door swung to, the prisoners and their guides being now in the corridor. Here the noise was terrible, increased by the prisoners in the cells, who answered the yells with groans and cries of terror. Mathilde recovered her strength as Laroche drew her along, and by the time they had descended a few steps and were in another corridor, she could almost walk alone. In a few minutes a door opened, and they were in the fresh air. Mathilde breathed freely now, and Laroche withdrew his arm.

"Thank you," she said; "I can walk alone. I thought I had more courage."

"You need be either an angel or a demon to bear such a sight as that," said Laroche.

They entered what was once the monastery garden, used as such before the Abbaye was converted into a prison. The gaoler led the way to a spot that was overgrown by creepers and trailing plants. Thrusting his lantern into the darkness, he pushed back the foliage and unbarred a door. He closed it behind him, and bolted it on the outer side. Passing along a corridor that might have been a crypt, they came to a strong oak gate.

"Rest here a moment," said the gaoler, "while I reconnoitre."

He unlocked the gate, opened it cautiously, and peered out.

"Hist! Lestoc, are you there?"

"Yes," came the answer, in a loud whisper.

"Come," said Laroche, leading the way into the road.

"Adieu," said the gaoler, "and good fortune."

In the dim light Mathilde saw a carriage, drawn by two horses, with a soldier on the box next to the driver, and several troopers on either side.

"You will find your mother in the coach," said Laroche, opening the door for Mathilde and her maid.

The moment he had closed it he mounted a led-horse, and the party moved rapidly away, while the scene of carnage continued within the Abbaye, whither we will return for a moment; not with a view to harrow the feelings of the reader, but to record an incident of the historic scenes that belongs to this present narrative. When the fiendish agents of the leaders of the Revolution had killed the priests, whom they had brought from the Hôtel de Ville, they sought for fresh victims in the Abbaye; and soon after Mathilde's departure the gaoler was compelled to unlock the cell she had occupied for contributories to the general death-roll. The empty cell infuriated the searchers, who, unfortunately, were rarely baulked by vacant pens. Among the victims of that dreadful time were Madame Bertin, and two of her daughters. Bertin himself, and his youngest child, escaped in an almost miraculous manner.

"Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men!" screamed Angélique, who had taken her place upon a pile of dead, swinging her bony arms and flourishing a tricolour flag, but taking no further part in the massacre that went on around her—a veritable human shambles. She was the evil spirit of it all; voiced its horror, justified its bloodshed, menaced every fresh victim as he was dragged forth to the slaughter. Nevertheless, she only seemed to know by intuition what was going on. Her mind and inner consciousness took in the Dantesque

scenes. Her eyes hardly for a second rested on the Inferno. She continually gazed upwards with her deep-set, bloodshot eyes; her gray hair streaming about her emaciated features in straggling wisps, a ragged coat that had once been worn by a king's guard hanging from her shoulders by one arm, a blood- and dust-stained skirt, frayed at her ankles, a *bonnet rouge* on her head, sabots red and grimy on her feet, completed her wild and witch-like costume. Only once did she pause in her incantations and maledictions, her saws of Scripture and her dirge-like texts. It was when a prisoner, with a girl clinging about his neck, was hurled into the middle of the court-yard. Two ruffians tried to separate them; and when an impatient patriot raised his pike to despatch them together, Angélique, like some inhuman thing with dabbled wings, sailed down from her grim post, and stood between the victims and the threatening pike.

"They are mine," she said; "mine!" and she proceeded to drag them through the scene of death. A murderous ruffian, weary of hacking and slashing the doomed prisoners of the Committee of Public Salvation, laughed as he wiped the red sweat from his face, and lent a hand to the escape of the two convicts, and insisted in accompanying Monsieur Bertin and his daughter to a place of comparative safety.

This was not by any means the only instance of revulsion of feeling that occurred during the massacres. It is related that a prisoner, saved by two of the most hardened of the executioners at the Abbaye, was conveyed home by them; they witnessed, with tears, his return to his family, and then went back with fresh vigour to the work of hewing down men and women, none of whom had been tried for their alleged offences, and many of whom were entirely innocent of what the Tribunal and the police chose to consider their crimes.

Madame Angélique, having passed through her lucid interval, returned to her pile of dead, and continued her anathemas against the living.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

TO WHAT END?

"OH, my dear!" exclaimed the duchess, as Mathilde crept into the carriage, assisted by her waiting-woman. "Oh, my dear, how I have prayed for this moment!"

"My dear mother!" said Mathilde, embracing her, as the carriage provided by the Deputy Grébauval rattled through the streets.

It might be that Mathilde was only saved from death at the Abbaye for what she might regard as a worse fate elsewhere. How that may be probably depends upon the warmth still remaining in the spark of love that once was bright in Grébauval's heart; whether the fire of lust had absorbed it in its coarser flame; not to mention the desire for vengeance, and the other passions that turned men into demons under the influence of an all-absorbing ambition of power.

"Alas, your father is a prisoner," said the duchess, in reply to Mathilde's inquiries.

"Where?" asked Mathilde.

"And Joseph, too; and Alphonse, the cook, and the butler; also my maid, and, indeed, every servant who did not escape to the woods; all, my dear; all; your father drew his rapier upon the guard, and wounded one of them. Oh, my love, would it not have been better to pretend we were of the people, than to have their rough hands upon us, their poignards at our throats?"

"My dear father!" said Mathilde. "And poor Joseph!"

"And the Bertins," said the duchess, "everyone of them—and we might all have got away immediately after the affair at Versailles. Oh, it is shocking to think of! And you, my own, you will never know how much I love you. Oh, my child, my only child!"

The duchess was beside herself with grief. Mathilde

embraced her silently, her heart bleeding for her father, for the Bertins, and for the old faithful servants, men and women, at the Château.

"But for our dear friend, Citizen Grébauval, you would not have twenty-four hours to live; it is he who saves you."

"I feared it," said Mathilde.

"It is to him that you must appeal for the life of your father."

"And the count?" said Mathilde. "Henri, my husband?"

"Oh, if you had only done what I wished," said the duchess; "but you are as obstinate as all the de Louvets, my poor Mathilde."

"Mother," said Mathilde, laying her head upon her shoulder, "where are we going now? To an official prison, or to some other?"

"You will never guess," said the duchess, "because you will not give Grébauval credit for being a man of honour."

"Where are we going?" asked Mathilde.

"To your husband's house," said the duchess, a tone of triumph in her voice.

"To my husband's house?" said Mathilde.

"To the Hôtel de Fournier!"

"By the Rue St. Honoré?" said Mathilde, more for the sake of saying something than by way of question.

If her mother had said, "To Monsieur Grébauval's," she would have known how to reply; but to her husband's own house was a strange destination to have been selected by the Citizen Grébauval.

"Intimation of your coming has been given to the steward; he and one or two other servants have remained faithful, and are still allowed their freedom. Dear Grébauval has been more than kind to me. I had always told him that persecuting Henri was not the way to win my daughter."

Mathilde winced, but made no reply.

"If your dear father had been reasonably discreet, we might all have been safe, and even happy, at the

Château. But it is no good saying what might have been; we have to face what is."

Mathilde thought she was prepared for whatever Fortune might have in store for her. Notwithstanding the terrible scenes that still haunted her, she felt that she had suffered the worst pang she might ever feel when de Fournier broke down at the gates of the Abbaye. It was a worse pain than death, to see the tears fall in agonising drops from his cheeks. A woman's tears come easy. A man's—and such a man as de Fournier—are drops of blood from his heart. Mathilde felt that God could have no more bitter cup for her than this.

Arrived at de Fournier's house, that stood back, behind heavy gates, in a courtyard, near the lower part of the Rue St. Honoré, the driver was challenged by a national guard on duty. Regular response being made, the gates were opened, and the carriage entered. Inside the courtyard other soldiers were posted.

The house was under Government surveillance and protection. It was a noble mansion of the sixteenth century, and in the days of de Fournier's father was a resort of the wit and fashion of Paris. De Fournier, the heir, had found the estate too impoverished to maintain the magnificent reputation of the house; but he had managed, by economy, to keep it in the family, and to entertain, on a modest scale, a few devoted friends.

Mathilde wandered through the suite of rooms set apart for her with strange emotions. From the dark cell of a prison to the home of her husband; but, alas, by favour of her husband's enemy and the man who might still "look, if not for love, at least for respectful treatment," to quote the duchess's words.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE WHITE BUTTONS.

WITHIN an hour of his parting with Jaffray Ellicott at the Conciergerie, de Fournier was at the trysting place.

A low whistle. The signal agreed upon. De Fournier responded. Jaffray entered the passage beneath the archway.

"Any difficulty in getting here?" the young fellow asked, in a low whisper.

"None," said de Fournier. "A patrol passed me; I crept into a doorway."

"You are fortunate in the darkness of the night."

"Yes," said de Fournier.

"Why, you are wet through!" exclaimed Jaffray, below his breath.

"I swam the Seine."

"Why?"

"There were men upon the Pont-Neuf. A sentinel was talking beneath the lantern at the corner; I thought they had made some inconvenient discovery, and I slipped into the river."

"And your pistols?"

"I stuck them in the collar of my coat."

"Very well," said Jaffray. "Follow me. There is a pass-word. Hush! step back. It is the patrol. They are coming along the street; they will pass the archway—at least I hope so."

They did. When the echo of their tramp had died away, Jaffray once more bade his friend follow him.

"The pass-word is 'Fidélité.'"

Jaffray groped his way along a narrow passage, de Fournier by his side. They made a sudden détour to the right, and entered a small courtyard. A swinging lantern disclosed two stairways, that led to upper storeys of a rambling building that might have been a

large workshop. Wooden balconies stretched along the front. Jaffray kept close to the building, in the shadow of stair-ways and balcony. In the further corner of the courtyard he paused. He tapped twice upon what seemed to be the coping-stone of an abutment of the building. Then he waited a while, and struck another part of the stone once, followed, after a brief interval, with three rapid knocks; none of his signals loud, but very distinct. He placed his ear to the stone.

"The reply should be my whistle-signal; don't forget it, should you come here alone," said Jaffray; "and your response, three slow distinct blows beneath the pediment, so."

While he spoke the wall opened sufficiently for them, by stooping very low, to enter. The aperture closed with a slow, heavy thud. They were in total darkness.

"Fidélité!" said Jaffray.

"Fidélité!" repeated de Fournier.

"Fidélité!" said the inner-guard of the club. "Advance by your right."

A few yards, and they entered a low small room, dimly lighted.

"Jaffray Ellicott and his friend, the Count de Fournier," said Jaffray to a man who was sitting by a lamp and smoking a long pipe of a light and elegant shape.

The man laid down his pipe, gave three knocks upon an inner door, a wicket of which was opened.

"Monsieur Jaffray Ellicott and the Count de Fournier, his friend," said the janitor, whereupon the door opened upon a well-furnished apartment, in which a number of men were assembled.

"Ah!" said the giant-like Daniel, of the Conciergerie, seizing de Fournier's hand, "my congratulations. You were last on the list. My fears were true. Ere this, the massacre has begun."

"Our friend requires change of raiment," said Jaffray, "and refreshment."

"First the oath," said a grey-headed official-looking person, rising from a table where he and three others were playing cards, to whom he apologised for interrupting the game.

"What is it?" asked de Fournier, his eyes becoming accustomed to the light of the apartment, which was of an ecclesiastical character; a large, open fireplace, a stone bench at the other end of the room, and the remains of two Gothic windows, blocked outside, as if they had been buried. A few chairs, an old oak seat with a high back, a few small tables, a mug or two, and several rush-mats on the stone floor; a side-board with bottles, jugs, and decanters, and a huge iron pot, simmering over the embers of a wood fire, completed the furnishing of the place. The occupants numbered about thirty, young and old; some in the characteristic attire of the noblesse, but most of them soberly clad, with cropped hair, and wearing the Republican colours. These were the more cautious members of the club, royalists all the same. Their more reckless friends were of the Duke de Louvet type, who were just as much extremists in their defiance of the new *régime* as in an opposite direction were their compatriots who had fled from France at the first sign of danger.

Daniel, the dog-fancier, as a confederate of the Conciergerie called him, was dressed in the garb of a merchant, very much after the fashion of de Fournier, except that, whereas the latter wore riding-boots, Daniel wore breeches, woollen hose, and plain buckled shoes. He was powerfully built, above the ordinary height, and a picture of good humour; a round blonde face, cleanly shaven (for even in gaol he had been regularly attended by the barber), curly brown hair, and full grey eyes. He had been a horse-dealer; had supplied the king with hacks and the army with cavalry horses; but had come to political grief for certain strong expressions against the Municipality, reported by a discharged servant. He was one of the first members of the White Button Club, and to him was accorded the duty of administering the new oath—"We swear allegiance to each other and the Throne; individually and collectively we swear to obey the orders of the Committee of Three, duly elected or re-elected on the first of every month; and each and

severally undertake, wherever and soever opportunity may present itself, within the frontiers or beyond, to execute and kill any member proved guilty of such breach of this oath as shall be deemed punishable with death; the which, as in all other things, we do for the honour and glory of France, as provided for by the royal and duly constituted authorities."

"Do you subscribe to this?"

"It is a trifle vague," said de Fournier; at which there was a general silence. "What, for instance, are the present orders of your Committee of Three?"

"That you shall know when you take the oath."

"I give you my word of honour that your secret is safe with me," said de Fournier; "but I subscribe nothing until I know how your committee is elected and what is the present command."

After a brief murmur of surprise, several members held a conference, in which Jaffray took part.

"We consent to your conditions," said the official-looking person who had first spoken. "They are evidence of your earnestness and honour. Our committee is elected by ballot on the first of every month; and the order of the day is the rescue of the king and queen and dauphin, and other members of the royal family, or either of them, from the Temple."

"Good," said de Fournier.

"Our plans are complete; you shall be made acquainted with them."

"I accept your oath," said de Fournier.

It was put to him in due form; and on full confirmation thereof he was presented with a white button, to be worn on special occasions as a decoration—in a general way to be used as a cravat brooch. It was a small block of mother-of-pearl, embossed with the initials of the club, and set in a rich circle of dead gold.

"And I hope," said the grey-headed official. "it may prove to you, as to us all, a talisman of victory."

"If we give our brother a dry coat, the talisman will look more ornamental, and be none the less talismanic," said Daniel, with a laugh. "Permit me, monsieur, to introduce you to the club's valet de chambre."

De Fournier followed Daniel, and supper was laid for two. The service of the club was undertaken in turns by its members. The idea might be an excellent one in the present day. The Boutons Blancs, however, had a view to the maintenance of their secrets, rather than service or ideas of equality, in organising their association upon principles of self-help.

Jaffray, for a moment, hardly knew de Fournier in the new suit with which his fellow-clubmen had provided him. A miscellaneous and extensive wardrobe was a feature of the appointments of the Cercle des Boutons Blancs. De Fournier might have been a bravo of the Faubourgs. A coat with triple capes, high collar, ample neckerchief, trousers ending in top-boots, an ill-shapen hat adorned with a torn tricolour cockade, and a patch of plaster over what was intended to indicate a gash across the cheek, might easily have disguised de Fournier from keener eyes than those of Jaffray.

The Buttons were accustomed to changes of costume and manners in their fellows. They played a game of peril, and it was common enough, during the Revolution, for the hunters and the hunted to masquerade in borrowed plumes. Royalty had tried it; and if the king had not incautiously put his head out of the carriage to make some inquiries about the road at St. Menéhould, the royal fugitives might have escaped capture at Varennes. When one is acting a part, one should never be one's self.

"And what do you think of the bludgeon?" said de Fournier. "Daniel tells me it is his chief weapon, and the most effective. A cavalry officer, he says, can play it like a sword; with this advantage over a sword, that it is always ready drawn."

"That is so," said Daniel, sitting by the supper-table and urging de Fournier to fall to. "Drawing a sword is a signal for others; lifting a club is a surprise. It is like an enemy in ambush; its work is sudden and deadly."

He smiled, as he rose and raised his bludgeon with a flourish by way of example; adding, "And now, Citizen

Rennier, as you are to be known so long as you wear Rennier's clothes, au revoir; we shall meet anon."

"At the Abbaye, perhaps?" said de Fournier.

"Yes, at the Abbaye," Daniel replied, "but not in the Abbaye, mind that. At present our motto must be death rather than capture."

Beneath all other operations of the club there was in continual progress a scheme for the rescue of the royal family, one of several schemes that both preceded and followed the flight to Varennes; but we are more concerned with schemes that affect other characters in the great tragedy of Paris. While de Fournier was accepting the hospitality of the White Buttons, the assassins of September, as we have seen, had begun their inhuman work.

"And now," said Jaffray, "that we have time to say a few words to each other, let me tell you what I know concerning the friends most dear to you. It is late, and a sad moment, to congratulate you on your marriage; but it is in good time to tell you that your wife is spared the massacre of the prisons, which is going on, probably, at this moment. Whither she has been removed I do not know; but by this time she is no longer at the Abbaye. You may spare yourself the peril of reconnoitring the Abbaye; and you would be well-advised to seek some permanent hiding-place. As for me, I must now return to Grébauval's. I may have to explain my absence; Grébauval requested me not to leave all night. Your disguise is safe, and you have the Robespierre password, as well as the Buttons'. Have a care; any person abroad after midnight is liable to arrest."

"Au revoir," said de Fournier; and they separated beneath the arch with the lantern.

"Nevertheless, I am for the Abbaye," said de Fournier to himself "with a well-filled purse, and a bludgeon, I am well armed."

The red and grey streaks of an early dawn were in the sky as he made his way, by the most unfrequented routes, to the monastic building so sadly misused in its latter days.

Nearing the Abbaye, he heard the hum of the crowd.

Many persons were in the neighbourhood as lookers-on. Later the Commune, at the request of patriotic women, erected a temporary gallery, where they could see the murders; for, after the first act of the tragedy, a mock court of justice was organised in the great hall, and the victims subjected to a grim trial, and as each prisoner was condemned, he or she was literally flung out to the mob, and cut down by both hired and amateur assassins.

De Fournier, in the shelter of a doorway, paused to see what was going on. He had scarcely well ensconced himself when a roaring band of ruffians, with gory garments and pikes reeking with the tokens of their frightful business, passed him crying, "A la Conciergerie!" They were followed by others at intervals, several of them with ghastly heads upon their pikes. Then fresh groups, all yelling and all bloody. Once, when the numbers became fewer, some of the older men tired with their exertions, the count could hardly restrain himself from rushing out upon them.

Presently, there was close by him a sudden halt of men, who were quarrelling among themselves.

"Kill him for an aristocrat!" shouted one.

"Cut his throat!" yelled another.

Then there was a scuffle; and de Fournier ventured a foot or two from his shelter.

As he did so the brawl waxed hot.

"A spy!" "Kill him!" "Death to the white cockade!" and other angry cries developed into a fight. In the midst of the fray de Fournier saw Daniel, whose bludgeon swung right and left, breaking a head at every swing of the strong arm. Daniel was seconded by two comrades of the Buttons whom de Fournier recognised; and the next moment another bludgeon joined the fray with deadly effect.

"Death to the assassins!" shouted de Fournier, with reckless daring; and almost momentarily he had cleared a space around him. The pikes gave way at every turn. De Fournier put all his woes and griefs into his bludgeon, and Daniel and his two other comrades dealt upon their assailants with redoubled fury.

"HE CREPT STEALTHILY ALONG TO THE PONT NOTRE DAME."

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Within five minutes they had laid a dozen hors de combat, how many of them falling to be removed with more honourable dead at the Abbaye was never known.

The ground cleared. "Fly!" said Daniel. "Each a different way."

A reinforcement of assassination arrived pell-mell, to pause and wonder for a moment what had happened, and the next to follow their leader, who was yelling, "A la Petite Force! A la Bicêtre!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

AFTER THE ADVENTURE OF THE WHITE BUTTONS.

THE Buttons had disappeared as if by magic.

De Fournier made a dash for the Hôtel Dieu. His first idea was to keep clear of the Conciergerie. His next was to seek for shelter in his own house. This might be madness; but there was method in it. There was more than one entrance open to him. He carried a master-key to most of the doors.

He could hear the shouts of the mob making its way to the Palais de Justice. The streets running east were free from tumult. At the Hôtel Dieu everything was quiet. He crept stealthily along to the Pont Nôtre Dame. The towers of the church seemed to touch the early morning sky. Day was rapidly breaking. The Seine was lapping its shelving banks. A few boats were moored almost in mid-stream.

From the Pont Nôtre Dame, across the Rue St. Denis and the Rue St. Martin, into the Rue St. Honoré, de Fournier found Paris still and calm; but it was the calmness of a city that might have been stricken with the plague.

If an early shutter was opened, or the latch of a window raised, it was done fearfully. Pale faces looked out, but swiftly disappeared as a patrol of the National

Guard tramped by. De Fournier had been very careful to avoid these arrogant forces of the night.

Once he had fled from a mob racing as if for very life to some wicked place of rendezvous. This and the sounds of riot and bloodshed, which he had left behind, were the only active indications of what was going on at the Abbaye, La Force, and the Conciergerie. Half Paris had gone to the frontiers. Such of the other half as were free had bolted its doors and prayed for safety. The rest were left to the swords and pikes of three hundred hired assassins and their assistants.

When de Fournier, skirting the Palais Royal, and with a view to reconnoitring his hôtel from various points, arrived at the outer gates giving upon the Rue St. Honoré, he saw a carriage and pair drive from the court-yard. The gates were held open by his butler. A gendarme sat on the box with the driver. Before the gates were closed he observed that the windows in the grand facade were illuminated.

What could this mean? Had the Municipality taken possession of his property? Had confiscation already begun? Who was going to occupy it? What was the meaning of his butler being in attendance? And on whom?

What could he do? The sun was beginning to rise. It would hardly be discreet to remain out of doors. His disguise was complete, to be sure. But the affair near the Abbaye might lead to his arrest as Rennier of the Button Club, which might turn out as ill as if he were taken in his true character. He knew an *estaminet* near the Halle aux Blés, the haunt, as Daniel had informed him, of some of their brethren, kept by a pretended insurgent of the most obtrusively murderous type, and as safe a place for a meal as any in Paris.

"The Ortolan" had already opened its doors; if, indeed, they had been closed all night. Citizen Yonne and his buxom wife were busy, even now, serving early guests with coffee and cognac and other refreshments. Cooking was going on in a room behind what might be called the bar, with its counter, its stove, and its assortment of bottles and mugs.

De Fournier noticed among the company the quiet official of the Buttons. He was listening to a young fellow of the working class who was detailing some of the scenes at the Abbaye.

A third joined in, with news from the Conciergerie.

While they were talking, a pair of ruffians entered, their smocks bloody, and with pikes in their hands.

They saluted Citizen Yonne with a peremptory order for eau-de-vie.

"And some meat, Yonne," said one of the two; "we are hungry."

"And tired with hard work."

"Yes; done while you lazy folk have been sleeping."

"I couldn't have believed that killing was such hard labour," said a third, who had now joined the other two. "I shall pity butchers, of all toilers, in future."

"For my part, I shall knock off until evening," said the first.

"That's right, citizen; don't overdo it," said Yonne; "moreover, while you rest you give others a chance. Madame Yonne will provide you with water at the back; go and wash, messieurs."

"Wash be cursed!" was the reply. "The good workman is not ashamed of the colour of his calling."

"May I wash, citizen?" said de Fournier. "I, too, have been at work. It's all right while it lasts, but I don't like the smell of it after."

"You are proud, comrade," said one of the three.

"Proud of my work, yes; but I am a confectioner by trade, and cleanliness is a habit."

"Where did you work with your pike?" asked the other, crediting de Fournier with a weapon that was standing by the wall near him.

"I did my bit of business," said de Fournier, "at the Abbaye."

"Good luck to you!" responded the man who pitied butchers, taking his glass of eau-de-vie at a gulp.

"If you really would like a wash," said Yonne to de Fournier, "being, as you say, a bit squeamish,—though I hold no man should be squeamish over the blood of

priests and aristocrats—why, come this way; anything to oblige a true patriot."

Yonne opened a door behind the bar. De Fournier followed him.

"Madame Yonne!" said the innkeeper, "some water and a towel."

As madame came forward from the kitchen, where two other women were busy over the fire, Yonne whispered to his wife; and as he passed de Fournier he said, "Is it *Fidélité?*"

"Yes," said de Fournier.

"Then let us call the counter-word '*Courage*,'" said Yonne, whose voice the next moment was heard denouncing the enemies of France, and prophesying good times for all, so soon as the people should have slain their enemies, Parisian and foreign.

"Has madame a bedroom where a tired man might rest?" asked de Fournier, as she poured a bowl of water for him and placed in his hands a piece of soap.

"Yes," said madame. "Observe the door on your right; it leads to the yard; outside, there is a gangway to the upper rooms on the left. Say nothing; when you have washed, disappear. Take the first room. Yonne will come to you."

De Fournier washed. He carefully removed the plaster over his imaginary scar. If he had been really seen sufficiently for detection in the affray near the Abbaye his pretended wound might have been the means of his identification.

Presently he acted upon Madame Yonne's instructions, and found himself in a small chamber, not ill furnished, and with a comfortable bed.

He fastened the outer door. There were two heavy bolts upon it; and he had barely done so when another door opened near the bed and Yonne entered.

"You may rest here, monsieur, and in safety. Take your fill of a good bed while you may. I have brought you a bottle of wine, some bread, and a small cheese; make your breakfast and go to sleep. A man's no good who has had no rest; and you look overdone, triste, broken."

"Do I? As bad as that, eh? Thank you, dear friend. The Buttons did not belie your good heart, nor your great discretion."

"That's all right, monsieur. I have seen you before."

"No doubt; whom have you not seen at The Ortolan?"

"Monsieur Rennier, I believe?"

"The same," said de Fournier.

"Banker. Ah, well, it is of no importance; you are well vouched for."

"I fear my disguise is a poor one," said de Fournier, more than pleased with it.

"No; on the contrary, it is a good one. A Button had already bespoken my good offices for you. But it is full confidence, with me, or none, Monsieur Rennier. I remember your face somewhere, and under painful circumstances. But what does it matter? Before you go I can help you, perhaps, with another touch or two. I have a wig that might suit you. My wife is clever at that kind of thing; she was a dresser at the opera."

"Thank you," said de Fournier; "you are very good."

"Trouble is your only equality," said Yonne. "Eat, drink, and sleep. I must leave you now. I will give you five hours' rest. Five hours, mark you; five hours of safety, five hours of repose; not a minute more or less. And, by the saints, I'll lock you in until the time is up."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

GRÉBAUVAL'S GAME OF LOVE.

"CITIZEN the Deputy Grébauval," said a servant, announcing an early visitor at the Hôtel de Fournier.

Mathilde and her mother were in the small salon overlooking the inner court-yard, with its tubs of ornamental and flowering shrubs and its circular grass-plot.

The duchess had prepared Mathilde for Grébauval's visit, though she was as little expectant as Mathilde of the melancholy mission which the deputy had undertaken.

He arrived in a sober costume of brown, but in admirable taste and with every token of careful grooming, his face cleanly shaven, his hair well dressed, silver buckles in his shoes, a brooch in his high cravat, a gold-mounted cane in his hand, and a rapier by his side. His likeness to the count, her husband, struck Mathilde, and she shivered at the thought of it.

"I have to congratulate you, madame," said Grébauval, "on your escape from the Abbaye."

Mathilde bowed.

"Thanks to your generosity, my dear friend," said the duchess.

"Rather to the dexterity of Citizen Laroche," said Grébauval.

"It is like you to say so," the duchess replied.

"I only say what is true, my dear madame. I fear you do not quite realise what has happened at the Abbaye, and what has occurred at the other prisons in Paris."

"Oh, yes, we do," said the duchess. "My daughter was a witness of the deaths of several of the unhappy priests."

"Is that so, indeed, madame?" said Grébauval, addressing Mathilde.

"Yes," said Mathilde; "a terrible sight."

"The people have taken into their own hands the punishment of the Tribunal's prisoners," said Grébauval. "It is deeply to be deplored, but the Executive is powerless."

"Are there no troops at your command?" asked Mathilde.

"They are marching to the frontier," said Grébauval. "If Paris is in the hands of the mob it is hard to say whether that is worse than if it should be ridden over by the Austrians and their French allies."

"You mean the emigrants?" said Mathilde. "They should not have left us."

"I am glad you think so," said Grébauval; "but,

having left you, they should not try to come back in the van of the foreign invader."

"It is not to give us this information that you have done us the honour to make so early a call, Monsieur Grébauval?" said Mathilde, sustaining with a bad grace the effort of a civil conversation with Grébauval, even though she owed her life to his good offices.

"Don't be impatient, my dear," said the duchess.

"You have a penetrating judgment, madame," said Grébauval; "and I am not much of a diplomatist. I have a sad mission to you."

"Everything is sad, it seems to me, in these days; but, finding myself in my husband's house, I have encouraged myself to hope that my mother's predictions of a change of fortune might be coming to us."

"Ah, my love," said the duchess, "I said that our friend the Deputy Grébauval would not let his kindness rest at your release from the Abbaye."

"Madame, your mother only does me justice. I have been anxious, and am desirous of serving you; but I am only a subordinate in the Government. I hold a very humble position in the councils of the Municipality and the Convention. I have powerful friends, it is true; but there are privileges, there are concessions, which even Citizen Robespierre has to forego."

"And your mission?" asked Mathilde

"A band of patriots, believing that they do their duty in ridding France of enemies within the city, while their allies are marching upon us, have taken the law into their own hands."

"Yes?" said Mathilde, filling the pause which Grébauval made in his difficult announcement.

"As I was saying," went on Grébauval, with an effort at something like emotion, "they have borne down the guards of the Conciergerie and slain many of the prisoners."

Mathilde, pale to the lips, pressed her hand upon her heart.

"I call upon you, madame, to summon all your fortitude."

Mathilde pressed her hands upon the arms of the chair in which she was sitting, and rose to her feet. Grébauval stood motionless before her. The duchess looked anxiously from one to the other.

"I am at your mercy," said Mathilde.

"It is with the deepest regret that I have to inform you of the death of your husband, the Citizen Fournier."

Mathilde uttered no cry. She stood supporting herself by the chair.

"Dead?" exclaimed the duchess. "Henri dead!"

"Alas, yes!" said Grébauval, "with many others who were awaiting their trial. The affair was too sudden for any resistance from the officials."

"And the duke?" said the duchess; "the duke?"

"I have no report as to the duke, madame. I believe he lives."

"What proof have you," asked Mathilde, the words falling slowly from her white lips, "that my husband is among the martyrs to France?"

"The list of those who fell, and notification of his burial."

Mathilde covered her face with her hands.

"Then you have a list of the victims?" said the duchess.

"It is here, madame," replied Grébauval, handing a paper to the duchess; "I fear you will find there the name of several of your servants." Then, turning to Mathilde, he continued, "If it is possible for me to assuage your grief, in which I share, believe me, I am at your command. The count would have been safe but for his rash conduct in the attack upon a Government escort, for I had made dispositions to help him. Madame the duchess knows I speak the truth."

"I believe you," the duchess said. "Oh, Mother of God, what shall we do? If we had not been so obstinate! And he was so brave! I shall never live through all these horrors. What is to become of us? Oh, my dear child, my poor Mathilde! I shall go distracted," went on the duchess, her grief finding relief in volubility of words; while Mathilde stood balancing herself

against the chair, her mind for the moment quite unhinged, but making mental pictures of the massacre she had seen at the Abbaye, and with Henri as one of the victims.

Grébauval did not know what colour these terrible memories gave to the truth of his report. Not that he had any doubt about the death of de Fournier; for the gaolers, rather than mention the escape of the eight prisoners an hour before the massacres, preferred to have them included in the morning's death-roll.

"I know how impossible it is at such a moment, and for me in particular, to offer you one word of consolation. I can only say that the revolution has passed out of the hands of those who began it, and threatens to overwhelm its present directors. As for me—— But I spare you any comment. A grave fault lies upon those Parisians who have leagued themselves beyond the frontiers with the invaders of France."

"It is so," said the duchess, who was rocking herself to and fro in an agony of grief and fear; "but that is no consolation to us. Oh, my God! What shall we do? Where can we go? If the duke had only listened to me; but I am only a foolish woman——what should I know about politics? Oh, my poor Mathilde, if Henri had not been so headstrong!"

Then she suddenly sat up and looked around her.

"Is it true, Grébauval? You are not frightening us for some good purpose?"

"Alas, no!" said Grébauval. "Madame, your daughter is a widow."

Something in the tone of Grébauval's voice, and the manner in which he suggested that she was free to marry again, struck Mathilde as if it were a blow. It brought the colour to her cheeks for a moment, stiffened her nerves, saved her from the fainting-fit that threatened her.

"And if it be so," she said, hoarsely, "I shall die a widow."

"Pardon me. I have fulfilled my painful mission," said Grébauval. "Unless I can be of any service to you, I will take my leave. I came in sympathy; I

leave, deploring what has occurred, both for your sakes, mesdames, and for France. It is bad for the State when vengeance takes the place of justice; but, moved by the appeals of the duchess, I had exerted all my influence for her friends."

"It is true, Mathilde," said the duchess. "Oh, yes, it is true. A bad business; but we have each other to live for. And the duke, Monsieur Grébauval? Oh, bring me tidings of him! Save him, and let us be gone from this prison of Paris. Give us passports, find us the means of retreat, save us, Grébauval! We are not obstinate, we will do what you wish. Did you say our servants? How many? Which of them?"

The duchess had lapsed once more into the volubility of her grief, rocking herself as before, but at last finding a relief in an outburst of tears and sobs.

Mathilde dropped upon her knees at her mother's feet, and buried her face in her lap.

Grébauval paused a moment, as if in doubt what to do, and then quietly withdrew.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ROBESPIERRE'S GAME OF CHESS.

FROM the Hôtel de Fournier Grébauval walked to the Café de la Régence, where Robespierre might occasionally be seen playing a quiet game of chess, his only recreation. Another visitor now and then to be seen at the same resort was young Bonaparte. If Robespierre could only have foreseen the possibilities of the Corsican's career, he would not have lived long after the remark he was known to have made to a companion, spectator of the insults to royalty in the Tuileries gardens: "They should cut down the first five hundred with grape-shot, and the remainder would soon take to flight." The time was soon to come when he should

give evidence of the sincerity of his contempt for the mob.

Grébauval found Robespierre intent upon a game at chess with an old *habitué* of the café, known there as Monsieur Melville, and to the reader as the official person of the Cercle des Boutons Blancs. At the café he was in a different kind of dress from that in which we made his acquaintance. Here he was, nevertheless; still the same quiet, self-reliant, distinguished-looking citizen. It was generally understood that he was a contributor to Marat's paper; in which, of course, there was no truth whatever.

There were many mysterious persons about Paris notwithstanding the general espionage. Marat, in his cellar, boasted that he was fully acquainted with everything and everybody. He took pains to know all about his colleagues and rivals, Danton, Robespierre, and St. Just, and he was not uninformed of the comings and goings of Grébauval, their not too transparent ally; but Paris had many a hiding-place, and many a scheming man and woman eluded Marat as well as the sleuth-hound Laroche. Marat thought he was intimate with every club and café in the revolted city. He had spies watching the Café Choiseul, the Café Pantin, the Café du Rendezvous, and the Café de la Régence; but Paris was, metaphorically, burrowed with rendezvous for all kinds of seditions, schisms, profanities, vices, and virtues; and, so far, the White Buttons had rejoiced unsuspected and undisturbed in their subterranean assemblies.

The *dame de comptoir* at the Café de la Régence was the rival in beauty of the lady at the adjacent Café Foy, of whom the Duc d'Orléans was enamoured.

The popular deputy and friend of Robespierre glanced at himself in a mirror and approved of the set of his cravat and collar, as he paid madame a compliment on the fashion of her cap and its tricolour cockade, and passed on to take his coffee in a corner, where, on the pretence of reading "L'Ami du Peuple," he could quietly observe Robespierre, and hold himself ready to join the Incorruptible One so soon as he should have finished his game.

"Check," said Robespierre's opponent, who was no other than the ubiquitous Melville, the official-looking person who had impressed de Fournier at the Cercle des Boutons Blancs; a man of distinguished manners, who had succeeded in keeping outside the category of the suspected, an *habitué* of many years' standing at the famous café, and who had frequently been invited by Robespierre to join him at his favourite game.

"Check," said Melville, taking a silver box from the pocket of his capacious waistcoat and refreshing himself with a pinch of the lightest of golden-looking dust, part of which he brushed with a white hand from his broad coat-collar.

"Kings will get into trouble," remarked Robespierre, with a cynical smile. "Can't move but by virtue of an ecclesiastical diversion. Well, we must humour him." And he brought a bishop to his majesty's relief.

"Check," again said Melville, taking the bishop with his knight.

"And the Church is a broken reed, eh?" said Robespierre. "Well, then the queen shall help him." And he moved his queen.

"Check," said Melville, taking the queen.

"What!" said Robespierre. "Lay your sacrilegious hand upon the queen! Nay, Monsieur Melville, I had you down in my list as a loyal man."

"And you are right, citizen. Loyal to France."

"But you take my queen?"

"To check the king."

"And you think that is wise? Perhaps you are right. It would have been better for Louis if he had had no queen at all."

"Better for Louis if he had had no throne," said Melville. "Check."

"And for the people," said Robespierre, his face bent upon the board, his mind evidently far away.

"Better for some of us if we had never been born," remarked Melville, his hand upon a pawn.

"Death makes compensation; faith requires martyrs," said Robespierre.

"Checkmate," said Melville.

"And with a pawn!" remarked Robespierre, a sneer showing his canine tooth. "With a mere pawn. Poor, weak, nondescript king!"

Then, turning to his opponent, he said, "Thank you, citizen, for a lesson in strategy. I must now go home and resume that other game in which kings and queens are taken, but not so easily put away as these counterfeits," whom the victorious player was now dropping, one by one, into a box by his side.

"These can be restored, monsieur," said the other.

"My own thought," said Robespierre. "In that respect your king lives to fight again. It was not so when Charles of England fell to the Brewer's pawns."

"But they made a new one," was the bantering reply.

"Royalty in France will die with Capet, and have no succession."

"We shall call it by some other name, by your leave, most illustrious citizen," said the ubiquitous and daring official of the Buttons, tendering his snuff-box to Robespierre. "Do me the honour, citizen."

Robespierre smiled in a painful kind of way. His smile was more of a sneer than a smile. It had a threat in it. You did not know that it might not turn to a snarl.

"Thank you," he said, taking a light pinch. "We shall call it the people, monsieur; and it will be the people."

Then, turning to Grébauval, Robespierre walked aside with his friend, and they left the café together.

"The reign of the people does not help the Café de la Régence, mademoiselle," said a mysterious Button, addressing the coquettish *dame de comptoir.*

"That is most true," she answered, dropping her voice, "but surely it is treason to say so."

"Vive Robespierre!" said one or two timid voices, as the master of affairs and his friend passed along the street in the direction of Robespierre's humble lodging.

"Vive Grébauval!" was also heard as they turned into the great thoroughfare of St. Honoré to disappear into the nearest bye-way.

"I was weary," said Robespierre, "overwhelmed with callers. Chess gives the brain rest."

"To many it is hard work," said Grébauval.

"Few know what hard work is," Robespierre replied.

He might well say so when contemplating his own austere life by way of comparison with the lives of most men. His career was one long self-denial. The crimes he committed were the outcome of what he conceived to be the highest principles. He never faltered. His doctrines were simple, and he supported them with a fanatical ardour that stopped at nothing. "The people are always right, the magistrates always corrupt. The fountain of power is in the people, and by the delegates of the people should power alone be exercised." To this principle of government he conceived it was the duty of the revolutionists to sweep every opponent from the path of liberty.

"Not one of them should escape," he was saying to Grébauval as they neared his abode. "Marat is right. Until every aristocratic head has fallen, the country is in danger."

"A monstrous contribution to that end was made this morning," said Grébauval.

"And will go on from day to day, but with less expedition. There must be trials, Citizen Grébauval; trials and judgments, in proper order."

"It was of the Citizen Louvet that I desired to speak with you," said Grébauval.

"He remains for judgment," said Robespierre. "I had your message about him; he was taken into the governor's office, and by this time has been restored to his cell."

"You are a master of detail," said Grébauval.

"My Abbaye reports are carefully made; I am thought to take special delight in this historic prison. My only interest, as you know, lies in clearing the ground of vipers that lie by in holes and corners, ready to sting should the enemy ever swarm through the gates of Paris."

"The Allies, in their policy of vengeance, help our cause, my friend," said Grébauval. "They unite us;

they give to the Revolution an intensity of patriotism that otherwise might have languished. The English statesman Burke predicted for us a group of independent republics. The attack of the Allies keeps us clear of any such possibility. We shall live to thank the foreign sovereigns when we hurl them back and follow them with our victorious standards."

"You are eloquent, Grébauval, and I believe you are right. I envy you the experience you had in America. What is the latest from England?"

"Active preparations for war," said Grébauval, "encouraged by the successes of the Austrians and the armed emigrants."

"What will they say when they know that they have taken Verdun? What will they say to the siege of Thionville?"

"We have many sympathisers in England, as in America," said Grébauval.

"But no allies," Robespierre replied, in a sharp, snappy tone, and with a twitching of his mouth and a satanic expression of face that interpreted his worst feelings. "Our answer, Grébauval, will be war to the knife with every royal government. All France is rising. In Savoy, even at Chambéry, there is a Jacobin Club of twelve hundred. They have formed a troop of missionaries, armed with the torch of reason and liberty, for the purpose of enlightening the Savoyards on their regeneration and imprescriptible rights. Nothing can withstand us, Grébauval. Every man in France will crowd to the frontiers."

"In that we agree, my friend," said Grébauval; "and once in a way we can be magnanimous."

"Once in a way," said Robespierre, "when occasion is the way. If the woman who hesitates is lost, Citizen Grébauval, what of the director of a nation?"

They entered a poor-looking house and climbed a plain stairway to Robespierre's apartments, the domestic economy of which was presided over by his sister.

The room in which he lived and conducted most of his business was the apartment of a man whose personal vanity was a strange incongruity, considered

with his principles, his austere life, and his savage thirst for blood.

On the walls, and hanging over his desk, were several portraits of himself,—one a miniature by Marie Bruyset, presented by Laroche. Whichever way he turned, a mirror reflected his form and figure. He was dressed with an almost affected fastidiousness, which characterised his attire during the entire sanguinary period of his reign. He wore a delicate muslin waistcoat, lined with rose-coloured silk, and a blue coat of the softest cloth; his linen was of the whitest, his sword-hilt and scabbard ornately decorated. You may see it still among the relics that are stored in the Carnavalet Museum, together with his portrait in various styles.

Ugly men often pride themselves on their appearance. Robespierre might have had reason to regard his figure with approval. He was slight, and of a not ungraceful carriage. In his portraits he appeared as a man of refinement and intellectuality, not without a certain urbane expression. Physiognomists, however, may possibly read the pictures differently. Anyhow, it is most true that in life his countenance was livid and marked with small-pox, though in this respect he was not so deeply pitted as Marat, to whose countenance the ravages of that terrible disease gave a grim severity. It was the face of one who might have come back to the world from long immurement in a convict prison. Robespierre was the superior of his two confederates, as to physique, intellect, and morality, if this much abused term can be applied to him in any sense. He rarely smiled, and when he did those who were honoured with his favour might well have wished he could not unbend so far. His smile was repellent, if not hideous; and, although he is mostly credited with an intellectual countenance, it was intellectual in the worst sense, the intellect of the spirit that denies.

Compared with Grébauval, Robespierre was, physically, a poor creature. The ancient blood of the de Fourniers made itself apparent in the well-poised head, the strong domineering face, and the haughty swing of

Grébauval's gait. The swarthy face was pale, but not with the livid hues of Robespierre's thin cheeks. It was of an olive hue, but with indications of the healthful blood beneath; and when Grébauval spoke you felt his voice had something of the ring of de Fournier's when the count was most in earnest.

They were a curious pair, these two men of the Revolution,—Grébauval, the friendly worshipper and lion's provider; Robespierre, the Satan of the time, with his Mephistophelian agents, Danton, Marat, and St. Just.

Grébauval, moved by his passion for Mathilde, was anxious to control the fate of the Duke de Louvet, but Robespierre would not rise to either his hints or his proposals; had other business; wanted to know all about England; asked for Grébauval's *précis* of the latest despatches; spoke of leaving Fouquier-Tinville, Maillard, Santerre, Pétion, Marat, and the rest to their unobstructed labours; mixed up the names of Danton and Marat with the commonest and most unimportant of assassins; was in no mood to consider even the smallest concession of mercy or policy; though Grébauval reminded him that both Danton and St. Just had apprised many persons of the coming executions, and had saved the lives of others who had been able to petition them personally.

"All the worse for Danton and St. Just," said Robespierre. "The men whom you save are the men whose poignards, sooner or later, seek your life."

"I have proved my devotion to France," said Grébauval.

"And you fondled the righteous instruments of justice last night with an inimitable oratory," said Robespierre.

"My life is my country"s."

"And your country your mistress's, eh?" Robespierre replied, with his threatening smile.

"Your recreation is chess," said Grébauval. "I permit myself to be in love."

"I, too, have been refused. Go to, man," was the

quick reply. "And when the time comes I will not buy her with the life of her father."

"And do you think d'Orléans will fall into your hands?"

"As surely as the Duke de Louvet is doomed."

"Is he doomed?"

"You are a judge, and don't know that?" said Robespierre.

"Perhaps, being a judge, I do."

"Otherwise you would sacrifice France to your mistress?"

"I believe I would let him go."

"Under similar circumstances I would not save my own father," Robespierre replied.

"The name of father represents nothing to me," said Grébauval.

"Then say mother, sister, brother, what you will. I am indebted to my sister for every little domestic comfort of these humble apartments. I would not spare her if she rebelled against the government of the people. No, by God, I would not?"

There was something so ferocious in the expression of Robespierre's face, livid with the intensity of the thought that he might have to sacrifice his sister, and would do so without a murmur, that Grébauval changed the subject abruptly.

"Here is a *précis* of the recent speeches of Burke and Fox and the young man Pitt, with a note on the proposals of alliance between Austria and Prussia and England."

"Thank you. Bonsoir, my friend," said Robespierre, taking Grébauval playfully by the ear, which sent a slight chill through the Grébauval anatomy.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

BETWEEN THE ACTS.

And thus the revolutionary madness spread and grew in feverish strength. The red tentacles of the demon that inspired it reached out into the departments all over France, and the cities of the provinces bettered the terrible examples of the capital. It met a foe in La Vendée that made the conflict a war of heroes.

The two Delaunys flew their banners for the king, and in their double commands did honour to their cause and to France. It was hard, on either side, to be human, egged on by the incessant cry of "No quarter! No prisoners!" which the Paris Convention had also ordered in the war against England. Men are mostly beasts in war. There are exceptions. The soldier of imagination is a man as well as a soldier. It was recorded for the brothers who fought near the Lion d'Or when this story was young that they more than once ran the risk of drum-head court-martial for acts of mercy on fields of victory. Since we may not follow their adventurous careers, at least it is good to know that they kept their manhood pure even in their day of success.

The history of the time has been written in hysterics and in tears. It has come down to us in every form of literature, but it is a never-ending story. The romancist may still discover in the chronicles, published and unpublished, in personal diaries, in family letters, in museum cabinets, sufficient material for his purpose; and the names of Mirabeau, Robespierre, Marat, Danton, and Napoleon will be names for the imaginative writer to conjure with when Paris is no more and the New Zealander has rummaged the foundations of London Bridge.

Fate, so busy with the leading characters in this present narrative, paused with de Fournier a fugitive from death; his wife, Mathilde, at home in her husband's hôtel, under the official protection of Grébauval; Marie Bruyset, shaken in health, but untamed in spirit, a constant visitor at the Conciergerie, where prisoners and gaolers knew her as "the little mother;" Laroche, torn between his love for Marie and his devotion to France; Madame Bertin and two of her daughters at rest, with other victims of the massacres of September 2; most of the servants of the Château de Louvet martyrs to their service, at the hands of Maillard and his crew; the faithful Joseph unaccounted for; Pierre Grappin safe behind his disfigurement; the Duke de Louvet, rescued from the massacres, but still a prisoner; and, when Mathilde most needed his watchful care, de Fournier ordered by the Committee of the White Buttons on active duty in the interests of the royal family.

The worst of the massacres over, Sans-culottism and murder were still kept busy, but in a more orderly way. Prisoners came and went. The mock trials of the Abbaye and the quick despatch of the Conciergerie gave place to more formal action. The movement against "domestic aristocrats," however, still went on, concurrently with the fighting at the frontiers and the establishment of the Republic, which may be said to have been born strong and powerful and with teeth, a young giant, Robespierre, Marat, St. Just, and Danton surrounding its cradle and speaking in its name.

Time passes,—a second of history, but full of notable and impressive events. The conflict between the Girondists and the Jacobins; the trial and execution of the king; the removal of the queen from the Abbaye to the Conciergerie; the conspiring friends of royalty now engrossed with schemes to rescue the queen; Jaffray Ellicott keeping his head, but endangering it, all the same, as a member of the White Buttons; the Duke de Louvet daily expecting to be ordered for execution, still remaining in durance, and getting used

to it, as people get used to everything,—Paris to the guillotine, Mathilde to the visits of Grébauval and the silence of de Fournier, the eternal silence, as she believed.

One mixes great things and small in the history of an interval of time such as this. The prosaic chronicler is restrained by the claims of exactitude. He records the trumpery resolution of a moribund Assembly, and counts the number of dead that fall to pike and guillotine, with the same scrupulous care. To his rival, the romancist, it is given to generalise and leave something to the imagination.

It is not difficult for the reader to conjure up for himself a sufficiently plausible scheme to account for the absence of de Fournier from Paris. Nearly every day had its plot for the rescue of the queen, the dauphin, and other members of the royal family. The White Buttons had once nearly succeeded in carrying them off, in the first days at the Temple; but at the wrong moment his majesty lost confidence in Monsieur Melville's plans.

De Fournier's military knowledge made him of special value in the latest scheme. It only needed sufficient success to get her majesty conveyed outside the barriers to secure her safety, so well had de Fournier arranged his plans with the Austrian outposts. There was no danger of any repetition of the bungling that ended at Varennes, if Melville and Daniel and the rest could only make a fair start.

Mathilde found some consolation, amidst the general sorrow, in the fact that her father still lived. Grébauval had given evidence of his sincere desire to save him, inasmuch as every one of the duke's prison companions had, one by one, fallen under the national machine. Her mother had become far more reasonable and affectionate than she had ever known her. The surveillance of the Hôtel de Fournier had been much relaxed as time went on. Grébauval was a constant visitor. The duchess had not ventured to ask Mathilde to see him, but Robespierre himself had called more than once in company with Grébauval. St. Just had also paid his

respects to the duchess, who was acknowledged as a true Republican and received in the questionable society of the time. She continually explained to Mathilde that all this was done in the family interest; not alone that they might live, but that they might retain at least a portion of their impoverished estates.

It is quite possible that Citoyenne de Louvet spoke the truth. Always an opportunist, from the first days of the Revolution, she had been systematically warned of what was going to happen by the man Grébauval, a platform in whose ambition was marriage with her daughter.

In these latter days Grébauval's passion for Mathilde had waned. There were many fascinating ladies in Paris who were delighted to give what Grébauval called his love their most complaisant consideration. He had no lack of admirers among the belles of the Republic; but this was not enough. He must be the husband of Mathilde. It was part of his revenge for the accident of his birth. He desired it that he might write his name across the register of de Fournier. It would have been a keener joy to take her from him. It must suffice to annex her, as part of de Fournier's goods and chattels, and so let her feel his contempt for her. She scorned his offer when he brought her his heart and his ambition. It would be his turn now. He was mean enough to bring into his plots against her freedom and self-respect all the animosity he had felt against the man whom she had preferred to him. He never for a moment doubted the death of de Fournier. The truth was known only to Jaffray Ellicott and the Committee of Three at the Cercle des Boutons Blancs.

And now it was the New Year. The old one had gone out ragged and torn, cut and gashed, a weary and battered pilgrim, foot-sore, heart-sore, decrepit, not put to bed calmly with the chiming of church bells, the singing of carols, and the scent of spiced wines, but flung headlong into his grave amidst the bellowings of the revolutionary maelstrom and declarations of war from the four corners of the earth, answered with Danton's "gage of battle, the head of a king," and such

other portentous incidents and omens that prophecy might well have seen in John the Divine's vision of the opening of the fourth seal.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A GRIM BIT OF HISTORY.

THE elastic law of suspects made it possible for the number of prisoners to become almost unlimited. From three hundred they rose rapidly to three thousand. They were disposed at the Mairie, at La Force, at the Conciergerie, at the Abbaye, at Saint Pélagie, and at the Madelonnettes, or women's prison, and in all the State prisons. Thiers and other chroniclers describe how at first, mixed with ordinary malefactors, they were flung upon straw. For a time their condition was pitiless. At length there were, as we have already seen, alleviations in the earliest days of the Revolution; and, as months went on, the changes were still more compatible with human existence.

As we have said, the rich were allowed to pay for the poor. The regimen was mitigated. Something almost approaching to cleanliness was observed. Food was better served. The table was set with some regard to elegance. The relations between the prisoners were easier. Intimacies and friendships were established. Misfortunes brought people closer together. The Duke de Louvet and Joseph, his valet, were even on familiar terms.

Quoting Thiers for our authority on this more cheerful aspect of affairs, one is struck by the buoyancy of the French character under misfortune. Their natural gaiety rose superior to their gloomy environment. Charming verses, romantic adventures, acts of benevolence, a singular confusion of ranks, of fortune, and of opinion, signalised the first three months of the detention of suspects.

It was at the Conciergerie, as Thiers records, that the commonweal of characters was most remarkable. There were in this prison some hundreds of unfortunates, having often three or four days to live when they were transferred there, that is to say, the interval comprised between their sentence and their execution. One saw there the Girondists brought from the Luxembourg; Madame Roland, who had previously enabled her husband to escape; the young Riouffe, Girez-Dupré, Bois-Guion, devoted to the cause of the proscribed, brought from Bordeaux; Bailly, arrested at Melun; Clavières, the ex-Minister of Finance; the Duke of Orléans, brought from Marseilles; Generals Houchard and Brunet, both reserved for the same fate; lastly, Marie Antoinette, whose heroic courage in misfortune had even softened the enemies of her days of prosperity.

The male and female prisoners were enabled during the day to hold communion together. An open railing only separated them in the hours of recreation. Benches were brought by the prisoners close to the barriers. Men and women, seated here for hours together, exchanged the gayest of proposals. They allowed themselves to dream of an impossible future. Cupid cast upon them a passing smile and fluttered his red pinions over the scene. Already the massacres of September, which had deluged the very spot with the blood of their predecessant prisoners, were forgotten. Some of the more distinguished women of the time gave no less attention to their toilettes than when they were free. There were gallants, too, who vied with them in dress, and found in new amours a compensation for restricted liberty.

The women's court-yard was lively all day long. Before mid-day they washed their linen at the prison fountain, after which they promenaded, gentle and simple alike, many of them beautiful and in the height of fashion, some animated with a light-hearted disregard of circumstances, others pathetic in their fears and sorrows.

Marie Bruyset had access to the Conciergerie at all

hours. She had, first by her father's influence, and lastly by the magic of her own personal force of character, become an institution of the place, known to all as "the little mother," welcomed alike by gaolers and prisoners; and she had on several occasions had interviews with Marie Antoinette. Closely as the queen was guarded, it was a common thing for citizens to be allowed to see her, but not alone. The poor woman was never out of sight or hearing of the two gendarmes who watched her day and night. But they became so used to the coming and going of Marie Bruyset all over the prison that more than once she had obtained access to the queen without ceremony. When her majesty was in bed, or dressing, she was separated from the officers on duty by a screen. Marie had slipped behind this temporary partition and sat with the queen twice without observation beyond the merest recognition.

One of the gendarmes, who seemed most in authority, had made himself particularly agreeable to Marie, and she had responded to his attentions with a significance that gave him the highest satisfaction, not to say hope. He might well be proud of his conquest, for Marie Bruyset was worthy of even the far nobler admiration that she excited in the court-yard of the male prisoners, not to mention the concierge himself.

She was a human streak of sunshine in the prison, and she dressed the character with artistic care. She wore her dark hair in curls about her low, compact forehead. Gathered over her ears, it was rolled up into a bunch on her neck. Her bonnet was like the head-dress which the English fashions had introduced into France in 1786, to be revived in England in 1792. It covered the head, closely frilled, and was tied under the chin with a bow of ribbon, and in Marie's case was decorated with the Republican colours. The vast fichu of the period, known as the *fichu menteur*, was made of a light stuff, projecting prominently over the bosom. The dress was long-waisted and full, long narrow sleeves, the material bluish-grey, and striped. High-heeled shoes and the manners of an aristocrat com-

pleted this bright unusual figure, which illuminated the Conciergerie, a concession both to the prisoners and to their guardians. Marie brought her pencil and her brushes, and made studies of both, and also played the part of coquette to perfection, considering that her heart was devoted to Jaffray Ellicott.

While this life of apparent gaiety went on, every day carried fresh victims to the guillotine; and it was the knowledge that any moment might be their last that fired some prisoners with a reckless courage and kept others equally depressed. Dauban, in his "History of the Prisons," gives an extract from a letter written from the Conciergerie by the Duke de Louvet to his friend Monsieur Bertin, who, in the character of a workman, had succeeded in living, with his daughter, undiscovered by the police, or regarded as dead, in a poor room on the sixth storey of a house in the Marais. Bertin knitted stockings, and his daughter assisted in the grocery-shop on the ground-floor, for a living. Monsieur Bertin, through a friend of Monsieur Joseph, had opened up communications with the duke, and Marie Bruyset was the intermediary letter-carrier.

"I shall not take any pleasure in losing my head," the duke wrote. "I shall defend it by all the means that honour permits and that the purity of an unassailable conscience furnishes. After that you may be quite satisfied concerning me.

"What you tell me of yourself seems to me of good enough omen, but changes nothing in my view of the future. I will not make a fool of myself with any hope; it would be too cruel to be deceived by it. I will await events with firmness. Need I say that I should welcome with joy the moment that would restore me to life. I have already looked death in the face, not only with intrepidity, but even with calmness; it is without cessation present to my eyes so as to familiarise me with it to the point of not wanting courage. My grief is in the sorrow of my wife and Mathilde. They have already tasted the bitterness of the cup in the death of our dear de Fournier, as you have, in the loss of those loved ones, your daughters.

"If I look with some sang-froid at the moment when I shall lose my life, I owe it especially to the spectacle which is renewed at each instant in this house; it is the antechamber of death. We live with it. One sups, one laughs, with companions of misfortune; the fatal decree is in their pocket. They are summoned the next day to the Tribunal; some hours afterwards we are informed of their condemnation; they cause their compliments to be conveyed to us, assuring us of their courage. Our manner of life does not change from that; it is a medley of horror on account of what we see, and of a gaiety in some sort savage—for we make merry often over the most frightful objects, to the point that we demonstrated the other day, to a new arrival, in what manner it happens, by means of a chair which we made serve as the bascule. Then, at this moment, here is one who sings—

"'Quand ils m'auront guillotiné,
Je n'aurai plus besoin de nez.'

"I ought to add, in order to prove to you how many ways we have of hardening ourselves, that an unhappy woman has just been making an appeal to me. 'The source of my tears is dried up,' she has told me; 'not one has escaped me since yesterday evening. The most sensitive of women is no longer capable of any sentiment; the affections which made the happiness of my life have lost all their strength. I regret nothing, I look with indifference to the moment of my death.'

"This woman is Mme. Laviolette de Tournay; she told of having expended enormous sums for the cause of liberty. National commissioners, generals, officers of the French armies, have been made welcome in that house, with as much distinction as zeal. She attributes her misfortunes to her husband. She had herself painted in those days, her hand resting upon a death's-head. She was going to send him this portrait. The allegory is cruel if the motif is true.

"Men are too wicked, too uselessly atrocious, and I shall not regret an existence so painful and which offers

me only a future still more hideous. You will believe me mad; by my faith, no!

"I was never so rational; I appreciate things for what they are worth; and the greatest favour of Nature—life—of which you speak to me in your letter, seems for me a very inconvenient drudgery that Nature, if she is not still blind, might spare beings who have not even enough sense to perceive their follies.

"I am beginning to be weary of living. I am daily expecting to be allowed to see my daughter. My wife also promises me a visit. She has obtained for herself many concessions at the hands of Grébauval. Hitherto prisoners at the Château, they are now in durance at the Hôtel de Fournier. Before I make the acquaintance of the guillotine I may hope to see them both. Through the medium of 'the little mother,' the only vision of light and life that cheers this abode of death, I understand that Mathilde is now allowed the liberty of her mother to go about the city; so I may look for them any day. I expect it will be to take my leave. When I am called before the Tribunal, dear friend, I shall show them how a gentleman of France can carry himself in the presence of vile usurpers; and when it comes to the last, God will give me strength to die with fortitude and dignity, as our good King Louis died, on the beautiful words of that intrepid priest, 'Son of Saint Louis, ascend to Heaven.'"

CHAPTER XL.

THE DUKE AND JOSEPH BEFORE THE REVOLUTIONARY TRIBUNAL.

THERE is a little "History of the Conciergerie," which the guide within the gates will sell to you for a couple of francs, in which you may read portions of this letter of the Duke de Louvet, with other details of the time. He will show you the hall of the Girondists,

which became their prison, the bare stone cell of Marie Antoinette, and the door through which she passed to appear before the Revolutionary Tribunal. Among those who preceded her was the Duke de Louvet, who, almost immediately after he had passed his letter through the railings into the hands of Marie Bruyset in the women's court-yard, was summoned, for the second and last time, to appear before the president and jurors of the Tribunal.

The jury was made up of two sections formed of individuals taken almost hap-hazard from among the fiercest and most enthusiastic of the revolutionists. They included the best-informed and the most ignorant of men. Jacques Renaud, who shouted "Vive le député Grébauval!" in the eighth chapter of this history, and his comrade Neroc, were both jurymen.

The court of this despotic Tribunal, from which there was no appeal, was composed of the following several chambers: the Chambers of the President and Vice-president; those of the Public Accuser and of his substitutes; the Chamber of the Jurors, and that of the Ushers.

The Chamber of the President was at Tourelles, on the bank of the river; those of the Seconds were in the interior; that of the Jurors was at the opposite extremity, on the side of the galleries of Palais; the fourth, which was the Ushers', was opposite the entrance of the Great Chamber.

Connected by a private stair from the narrow street, at the back of the Palais, was Grébauval's bureau and general lodging, in immediate touch with the police and judiciary powers; an official more or less unattached, but with special powers, the legal adviser and associate of Robespierre and Danton, a deputy and magistrate, and a powerful member of the Jacobin Club.

Since the massacres of September he had been more than usually active in the cause of the Republic. Moreover, the declaration of war with England had still further exalted the importance of his diplomatic services. Grébauval had, indeed, organised a system of espionage against Pitt, and operated counter-checks

to the supposed activity of the English Minister's agents in France. With increased power, and offers of official positions which he preferred for the present to decline, Grébauval became sterner in the work he undertook. There were not wanting, to his mind, evidences of a breach between Danton and Robespierre; and, while he maintained a modest reserve in regard to his own personal aims, he held himself sufficiently clear of compromising personal alliances to advance at the right moment with Robespierre or Danton, with St Just or even Marat, or without them. Having waded in so far, he was astute enough to know that there was no going back, and that friendship was only a name among the men who aspired to the dictatorship of France, either singly or in combination.

When the jurors of the Revolutionary Tribunal had heard the arguments for and against the prisoners before the court, they retired into their chamber to deliberate on the documents which would be presented to them. Sometimes there were no documents, and often there was no deliberation.

Everything was arranged in advance. A juror had two lists; the names of the victims and of those who were to be acquitted. While this juror was doing his work, your Conciergerie guide will tell you, his colleagues walked about the passages or went up-stairs to breakfast at the porter's, who kept a refreshment-room. The prisoners were then shut up under the guard of as many gendarmes. Finally, the reappearance of the jurors occurred at the end of three-quarters of an hour. The president formally demanded of them, "Has there existed a conspiracy against the unity and indivisibility of the Republic, against the liberty and the safety of the French people? Are So-and-so guilty of this conspiracy?"

In the few cases of acquittal the reply would be in the negative, the first juror alone speaking. In the case of a condemnation the formal reply was, "On my honour and on my conscience, the fact is unquestionable;" and, in words of reproach and contumely, sentence of death was pronounced; and when justice

was in a special hurry, the victim would be taken straightway to the guillotine. Usually, however, he or she had the respite of a few hours, sometimes of days, and occasionally—a most unusual thing—of weeks.

It was before this tribunal that the Duke de Louvet, Joseph, his valet, and other prisoners were arraigned. The charge was the general one of conspiring against the Republic, with, as regarded Joseph and his master, the added crime of resisting the officers of the law and being accessory to the murder of certain soldiers of the National Guard acting as an escort to a prisoner duly and formally in the hands of the law.

Fouquier-Tinville, the Public Accuser, was brief in his words and sombre in his manner. He had nothing to regret during the day. Every prisoner had been condemned. Those among whom de Louvet and Joseph were arraigned, as they looked upon him and heard his voice, must have given up all hope.

Below the president's chair sat Jaffray Ellicott, sent to report the proceedings to Grébauval, who was himself an occasional spectator, if not a participator, in these tragic travesties of justice. The violent death of Marat had accentuated the action of the police, the magistracy, and the Revolutionary Tribunal, and at the same time had struck a thrill of anxiety in the breasts of the revolutionary leaders. Grébauval, without counting the possible opposition of Robespierre, had resolved to let the Duke de Louvet go. His château was already doomed to confiscation. Only Grébauval's personal insistence, on the ground of his forthcoming marriage with Citoyenne Mathilde, kept the Hôtel de Fournier from the grip of the law.

At the same time, de Louvet's demeanour before the Tribunal would have cost him his life, almost in spite of the most powerful intervention. If such stimulus had been wanted, there was the conduct of a girl named Eglé as an example of courage. The passing incident is historically vouched for, and marks a bright page in the guide-book, that will interest you when you visit the scene where it was enacted. But you shall

find no record of the tribute which de Louvet paid to her fine nature, nor of these other chronicles herein rescued from oblivion.

Some seditious cries, uttered by the youthful prisoner, had caused her to be brought to the Conciergerie, with one of her companions. They might have been forgotten in the Conciergerie, but they signalised themselves so well that Fouquier-Tinville caused them to be indicted "as having conspired with the queen against the sovereignty and the liberty of the people."

Eglé was evidently proud of the accusation. Questioned by the president, she avowed having uttered the words charged against her, but when she was accused of complicity with the queen she shrugged her shoulders, saying, "As to that, that is fine!—by my faith, witty! I, an accomplice of her whom you call the Widow Capet, and who was indeed the queen in spite of your teeth! I, a poor girl, who gained her living at the corner of the streets, and who would not have approached a scullion of her kitchen! It is worthy of a set of scamps and imbeciles such as you!"

They professed to be amused at her violent language. Perhaps she was drunk, as she may have been when she had uttered the incriminating words. She repelled their protection, and repeated the incriminating words. They forced her to sit down. Her companion appeared, on the contrary, resolved to pass herself off as drunk at the moment of her arrest.

Eglé cried out to her that her weakness was a crime, and that she was dishonouring herself. She called upon her to be courageous. Her companion, however, abjured her error, and was condemned to some twenty years at the Salpêtrière, and Eglé to the penalty of death.

She smiled at the reading of the sentence. When the question was raised as to the confiscation of her goods, she cried out, "Ah, robbers! that is what I was waiting for. I wish you well of my goods! What you can eat of them will not give you indigestion."

"And now, George de Louvet, *ci-devant* duke, and you, Joseph Millet, you have heard the charges against

you; you were one and the same in the plot against the Convention and the Government of the country, master and man. What have you to say?"

Joseph looked at his master.

The duke, bearing himself with the dignity of a nobleman who had reason to be proud of his descent and his services to the State, said, "Citizen President, if it is permitted, I would ask your clemency for my servant."

"He will defend himself. My question is to you."

"He cannot defend himself, may it please you, Citizen President. He will never confess that whatever brings him within the law was done at my instigation. His only crime is that he has been faithful in his service."

"What have you to say on your own behalf?" asked the president, paying no attention to the duke's appeal. "Do you deny that you have conspired against the Republic?"

"As this man by my side was faithful to his master, so was I to mine."

"And who was yours?"

"The king, whom you have slain."

A murmur ran through the court. Jaffray felt his heart beating with anxiety.

"You would have fought for the man Capet, whom you called king?"

"I reply, in the spirit of the poor creature you have just condemned, that you may call his majesty what you please, but he was your king."

"You do not help your position by treating the court with contempt. But your manner is compatible with the tyranny you fostered in the past, and which has brought you here to-day, by a just reversal of Fate."

"I supported the Constitution of France, to which I was bound in honour and by oath. I was not against any reform that should be sanctioned by the states of the realm. I am a soldier of France. I have fought her battles in the field. I have represented her interests at foreign courts. I would at any time have sac-

rificed my life in her cause. I do not fear losing it now."

A few, more daring than the rest in the motley crowd of lookers-on, cheered the brave speech, but were immediately shouted down.

"The king being deposed by the people, who are the fountain of law and honour, you drew your sword against her patriot soldiers?"

"I did not, Citizen President."

"You were present at their assassination. You accompanied the assassins to St. Germain; you are the father-in-law of Henri Lavelle, the prisoner whom they rescued, the friend of Bertin and others, who, joining with two renegade Swiss, struck down a commissary of police, a captain of the National Guard, and killed outright several of the men under their command?"

"It was a pretty fight," said the duke, with a smile. "Only Frenchmen could have fought so well; only Frenchmen know how to use the sword like gentlemen. It is Greek and Greek when Frenchmen fight."

A cheer broke out among the crowd. It was led by a big, burly, simple-looking fellow, whom we know as Daniel; but he kept his secret well.

"It is a pity that you should not have drawn your sword on the right side."

"I have had no opportunity, monsieur le président. I would have gone to the frontier with my son-in-law, and fought for France, king or no king, if the honour of our word could have been a guarantee of our honesty."

"We know what that going to the frontier means, Citizen Duke: the desertion of France in her need, to return with her foes."

"I do not defend the emigrants," said the duke. "Nothing would have induced me to emigrate; nor would it now, even to escape the vengeance of your tribunal. Life is sweet, if it is to be shared with those we love. I have a wife and daughter. You have made my daughter a widow, as you have made the queen. It will break her heart if you make her fatherless. For that reason I would desire to live. Conscious that I

have done nothing to deserve death, I will not burden my conscience with a lie to save my head."

"You have forfeited it, to begin with, in that you are an aristocrat, hostile to the Republic, an enemy in our borders, a possible ally of the enemies without. Your case will be considered by the jury. Sit down."

The duke, with a sigh, took a pinch of snuff, and fixed his eyes upon Joseph, who, as he stood forward, looked a distinguished and intellectual citizen compared with the rough, thick-set president.

"Your plea is that you did what your master told you? Is that so?"

"No, it is not, monsieur le président. My plea is that I only did what I thought was my duty. I have no feeling against France. Why should I? It is my birthplace. I was born in Paris, and have as much right to live here in freedom as any man."

"But not to abuse it," said the president. "You took part in the rescue of Henri Lavelle, *ci-devant* Comte de Fournier?"

"It is true."

"You fought against the National troops?"

"I defended myself."

"You were not attacked."

"Yes; the soldiers fired first, and without warning."

"They were defending their prisoner."

"I was defending myself."

"You accompanied Henri Lavelle and Mathilde Louvet to St. Germain?"

"I did."

"You endeavoured to get them on board a vessel, that they might leave France?"

"God help me, I did so, and failed."

"You regret that?"

"With all my heart."

"Sit down; the jury will take counsel on your case."

The jury retired, and visited the restaurant in the building, where they drank heavily. The names of both Joseph and the duke were on their list to be condemned.

On their return into court, their spokesman answered to the president's question that on their honour and conscience they found the prisoners guilty.

The president thereupon pronounced sentence of death.

"My poor dear friend!" said the duke, laying his hand affectionately upon Joseph's shoulder.

"My dear, good master!" said Joseph.

CHAPTER XLI.

MARIE BRUYSET AND THE CHESS-PLAYER.

"DOES the artist Mademoiselle Bruyset live hereabouts?" asked a white-haired gentleman, soberly clad in black.

"Yes, citizen," said a tenant of the building (which is well known to the reader, in the Rue Barnabé) who was lounging in the door-way. "On the top floor."

"She paints miniatures; is that so, my friend?"

"She might be better occupied," said the lounger; "but that is her business, I believe."

"Thank you," said Monsieur Melville. "I have a commission for her."

He ascended the old oak stairway, paused on the landings to observe the rooms of the other lodgers, and presently knocked at Marie's door.

She opened it. Monsieur bowed.

"Enter, if you please," said Marie.

"You are alone?"

"Yes."

"What is behind the curtain?"

"My little room."

"The one you told me of?"

"Yes."

"Draw the curtain."

She drew it, and, opening a door, exposed the apart-

ment in which Jaffray Ellicott had found his hiding-place early in the adventures of this narrative.

"It is well. And what is your report?"

"The queen declines."

"What did she say?"

"'I fear failure,' she said; 'it would mean the death of the dauphin, it would bring many friends to the scaffold.'"

"And you said?"

"'I assure you, madame,' I replied, 'that the scheme is perfect: you will honour me by wearing my clothes. I remain here in your place; you go out free, that is secured; there is no weakness in a single detail.'"

"And then?"

"'I have decided,' she replied; 'I have fully considered; I am deeply sensible of the devotion of my friends; you, my child, have my warmest gratitude.' She took me in her arms and kissed me; oh, so thin and worn and weak, it made my heart bleed."

"You urged her all you could?"

"I left nothing unsaid or undone."

"You believe her decision is final?"

"I am sure it is. She will follow the king to heaven."

"We are all sure of our reward there, my dear mademoiselle; but we want a little here below. You are a brave girl. Permit me to kiss your hand."

She held forth her hand. Having kissed the tips of her fingers, he took from his pocket a ring, and, laying it in her white palm, said, "Wear this, as a souvenir of our good intentions."

"Thank you, monsieur," said Marie, putting it on her middle finger; "it is a ruby."

"It typifies our agony," said Melville, with a cold smile.

There was a knock at the door.

"Enter!" said Marie.

Laroche walked in. Melville's back was towards him.

"Then, mademoiselle, we shall say two miniatures, if you please; Robespierre and Danton, the saviours of France."

"Thank you, citizen. You are a generous patron."

"Not so generous as you think. Your price must be less, mademoiselle, in proportion, for the two. But we will discuss that later."

Then, turning round, he saw Laroche.

"Citizen Laroche!" he said. "How do you do, monsieur? If it is not too early, a pinch of snuff?"

"Thank you, Citizen Melville," said Laroche, dipping his thick fingers into Melville's jewelled box, and at the same time looking at Marie with a suspicious twinkle in his deep-set eyes.

"You rarely patronise the Café de la Régence nowadays," said Melville.

"No time for cafés," said Laroche; "too busy with prisons."

"There are rumours of a conspiracy to rescue the queen," said Melville.

"The queen?" said Laroche. "And who may she be?"

"The Widow Capet," said Melville. "I call her the queen because it sounds grander for the Republic to have a queen in durance than a mere widow Capet."

"You are a man of fancy," said Laroche. "Why not have a picture of the 'sleuth-hound,' as my daughter calls her father?"

"And who may your daughter be?"

"Don't you know that Marie is my daughter?"

"I did not know," said Melville—though he knew well enough.

"Very well, then, she is; takes the maiden name of her mother because she does not like my profession."

"Really!" said Melville. "But art is always eccentric, and mademoiselle is a woman of genius."

"Monsieur very much overrates my abilities," said Marie; "as much as my father lowers my estimate of him when he repeats unkindly what I said in my haste."

"Ah, well, we'll say no more about it, my girl," replied Laroche, taking her face between his coarse hands and kissing her on both cheeks.

"I have an appointment at the café for a game of

chess," said Melville. "I take my leave at this happy moment. Bonjour, Citizen Laroche; bonjour, my dear young lady."

"What is he here for?" asked Laroche, the moment that Melville was beyond hearing. "Not to commission portraits."

"Yes, to commission portraits," said Marie. "And I would rather make a miniature of you than of your two friends."

"There is some intrigue going on at the Conciergerie."

"Indeed! In which Citizen Melville is concerned? Why, father, you are losing your wits."

"I saw you yesterday in the court-yard talking to the bitterest opponent of the Republic; I saw his face, could almost read his thoughts; and you were encouraging his hopes, whatever they were. But he shall go to the scaffold to-morrow. I have spoken to Fouquier-Tinville; and that is all you have done for him."

Marie sighed and leaned against the window.

"The scaffold! All that is good and noblest goes to the scaffold. You will leave no one worth living with. The poor man wanted me to convey a letter to his wife. I said I would ask your permission."

"Thank you. It is a lie; you said you would do what he wished."

"Since you know so well that you call me a liar, why, there is no more to be said."

"Marie," Laroche replied, with a sudden change of tone, "Marie! you are the torment of my life. I would die for you, but it is worse than death to be fooled and held cheap by you. You know you lie to me every day; you know you are untrue to the Republic; you know you wear its colours and hate it all the time. What is to become of you?"

"Leave me alone," she said. "I will never compromise you. I do lie to you; I admit it. But you should not compel me to do so. The lies are yours. The truth would be a dagger, and yet I do you no harm. If I rescue one victim, what is that to you? You

have fifty others by way of compensation. One poor creature to my share is not much."

"You are a fool, Marie, a fool; you will lose your head. If you continue your intrigues, it is not possible that you can escape——"

"Unless you help me."

"I cannot help you; I will not help you."

"Yes, you will. Once; only once."

"What is it?"

"Above the queen herself I love the Citoyenne Mathilde de Fournier. If I could snatch the queen from the clutches of Fouquier-Tinville I would."

"*Sacré nom!* I must not listen to you."

"You shall! I am your daughter. I love you." And she flung her arms about his neck.

"What would you do for me if some wretch forced me to marry him against my will, or forced me without marriage; me your child, your only child!"

Marie, baulked of one prize, now went for another; and she was too much of a woman for Laroche. He had no other love in life but this girl, and he kissed her white arms as they fondled him.

"You don't answer, but I know what you would say. Give me access to Mathilde de Fournier. I have been there; they refused even your pass; said it did not apply in this case."

"What would you?"

"I want to see her."

"I will take you there. Come now."

"Will you leave me there?"

"Yes."

"And let me stay as long as I please?"

"As long as you please," said Laroche. "But never again speak of me as the sleuth-hound, never again as any other than your father! And never lie to me any more."

"Don't make me," said Marie, coquettishly.

"How make you?"

"By asking me difficult questions. I will put on my hat."

"A good thing Fournier is not alive to warn the

citoyenne his wife of the secret place in the wainscot of her boudoir," thought Laroche, as he smiled with grim approval of a plan to overhear Marie's interview with the prisoner of the Hôtel de Fournier

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CHAPTER XLII.

GRÉBAUVAL AND LAROCHE IN COUNCIL.

At the entrance of the hôtel a messenger on horseback called Laroche by name.

Laroche turned, to receive a letter.

"Come to me at once," he read above the signature of Grébauval.

"Take my horse, citizen," said the messenger.

"Admit the citoyenne my daughter," said Laroche to the janitor, "to see the Citoyenne Fournier; now, and at any time."

"Thank you, father," said Marie, as she entered the gateway.

Laroche mounted the messenger's horse and rode to the Palais de Justice. He did not notice the weather, except to feel a certain buoyancy in his blood. It had been wintry and cold. This morning there was a soft westerly wind, with blue skies. It was the first harbinger of the coming spring.

As he rode along the streets and across the Pont-Neuf, Paris had quite a gay and festive appearance. Men were sitting outside cafés and cabarets sipping their coffee, eau-de-vie, absinthe, or beer, and chatting as if they had never heard of the guillotine nor had any fear of the enemy who was thundering at their gates. Women were going up and down and gossiping, with red caps upon their heads. Here and there they were playing cards and dominos with the men. There were hungry-looking crowds about bakers' shops, and starved wretches at street corners. But nobody heeded them. Everybody wore the Republican cock-

ade. By the Pont-Neuf a Punchinello was squealing the song of the day, and during the refrain decapitating royalist dolls with a red-painted model of the machine of the Place de la Grêve. The tricolour flag floated from prominent buildings. There were boats upon the river; and as Laroche rode along by the front of the Palais with the two spiry towers he passed the usual throng of men and women waiting for the procession to the guillotine. He had to pass round the ancient prison and thread his way through several back streets before he came to the ordinary stairway that led to the hôtel and bureau of the deputy Grébauval.

Giving his horse in charge of a porter in attendance at Grébauval's private door, he ascended an old rambling stairway, and presently, after passing the usual guards, was admitted into Grébauval's principal anteroom, where he found Jaffray Ellicott hard at work.

"Good-morning, Citizen Ellicott," said Laroche.

"The same to you, citizen," said Jaffray. "Monsieur Grébauval is expecting you."

"I am at his service."

Jaffray left his desk to acquaint Grébauval with Laroche's arrival.

"Come this way," said Grébauval, as Laroche entered the large room, with its bay window and balcony: he opened a door in the wainscot, and, closing it behind his visitor, said, "I have been waiting for you."

"I am sorry," said Laroche, looking round the closet into which Grébauval had brought him.

"You have been here before?" said Grébauval.

"Once," said Laroche.

"The day I gave you instructions about the flight of de Fournier to Honfleur."

"The Delaunys," said Laroche.

"It is the same thing. The Delaunys gave the cue to the rest."

"You reserve this closet for great occasions," said Laroche, willing to avoid further reference to the Honfleur incident, for which Grébauval always took all the credit whenever he and Laroche compared notes about services to the Republic.

"For great occasions, as you say, Laroche; and for secrets that belong to you and me."

"This is a great occasion, then?"

"Yes. Do you know the Cercle des Boutons Blancs?"

"There are clubs in every tavern," said Laroche. "I could give you a list as long as the Rue St. Martin."

"But the Boutons Blancs?"

"What of it, monsieur?"

"Do you know it?"

"I know every club and every coffee-house in Paris,—Jacobins, Royalists, financial, atheistic, the Noirs, the Woollen Caps, the Ladies, the Liberals, the Voltaire, the Pikes. What would you, monsieur? Is it to interrogate the police or to employ its most responsible agent?"

"You are right, Laroche; it is better to appear wise than to confess your ignorance. I will tell you all about the Buttons. This is their insignia."

He handed a white button, set in rich gold, to Laroche, who turned it over and gave it back to Grébauval.

"You know it?"

"I have seen it before."

"It was given to me by a young fellow in return for his wife. She had been indiscreet; had threatened the life of Robespierre. I have given them a passport and an escort; they have left France."

"You are too generous," said Laroche.

"You cannot be too generous in rewarding a generous spy. He had only been married a month, and the poor devil was madly in love with his wife; she mad on royalty and hatred of Robespierre. Have you seen this before?"

He laid upon the table a pen-and-ink plan.

Laroche bent over it.

"I know the place," said Laroche; "it was originally a monastic establishment. It is in the midst of crooked streets and passages, has three approaches, would require sets of earth-stoppers as they hunt vermin. It is

easy to burrow in the monastery of the Cercle des Boutons Blancs. There are galleries above and below, and many exits."

"To-night there will be a full muster. They meet to condole with each other on the failure of a plan to rescue the queen."

"I frustrated it," said Laroche, though he had done nothing of the kind.

"You were acquainted with the plot and did not take me into your confidence?"

"You are a busy man," said Laroche, "and Paris is full of plots and plotters."

Laroche, it is true, had received some vague intelligence that had made him watchful, and he had suggested extra precautions to hold the queen beyond all possibility of any attempt at release.

"The chief of the Buttons is one Melville, the very man who is a regular *habitué* at the Café de la Régence," said Grébauval.

"You have been duped, monsieur," said Laroche.

"I think not," Grébauval replied. "I have discussed him with the Citizen Robespierre, who plays chess with him and finds in his conversation a decided royalist tendency."

"Well, monsieur?"

"Do you know this Melville?"

"Yes."

"Do you think him honest?"

"Not if he is the chief of the Buttons and it is a treasonable club."

"Its watchwords are royalist, its rallying-cry royalist: its cockade is white, and it calls itself the Club of the White Buttons."

"And Monsieur Melville, who is known at the Café de la Régence, is its chief?"

"Yes; and it counts among its members one de Fournier, a *ci-devant* comte."

"Counted," said Laroche.

"Counts!" repeated Grébauval, his dark face working with exultation at his triumph over Laroche.

"He lives, then?" said Laroche, calmly.

"You remember the attack on the patriots *en route* for the Conciergerie on September 2?"

"Yes."

"De Fournier led it."

"My report was against Daniel, the giant," said Laroche.

"He was there.'

"And Fournier?" said Laroche, quietly, while Grébauval chuckled.

Grébauval prided himself upon his secret information. Once or twice he and Marat had almost quarrelled over the question of which of them knew most about the undercurrents of Paris life, more particularly as they affected the safety of the Republic.

Laroche knew this.

"I do not underrate your knowledge of Paris as Marat does," he said.

"Damn Marat!" said Grébauval. "He is as vain as he is dirty."

"I will not report your opinion, Monsieur Grébauval," said Laroche.

"He knows it, Laroche, he knows it; and I know you."

"That is why you try to lower me in my own esteem, is it?" said Laroche.

"No, Laroche," said Grébauval; "I only desire to show you that it is worth while to collaborate with me."

"I deem it an honour to do so."

"Then why do you keep from me so many of your secrets, and spring upon me so many of your successes as surprises for which I should have been prepared?"

"Professional vanity," said Laroche; "nothing more. We are all human."

"Some of us," said Grébauval,—"some of us too human. By God, too human! But I turn over a new leaf from this day, Laroche."

"Then do me the honour to join me in a pinch of snuff," said Laroche, dragging an old painted horn box from his waistcoat pocket and tapping it with his strong square fingers.

"To be a sign that you forgive me?"

"For forestalling me with your generous spy. Yes, we will share the glory of the victory when it is won."

"The victory shall be yours, Laroche; its initiation is mine; but the secret is with us two. If I play a game of chess with you, Laroche, it is not a game in the street; it is our affair; and if I win a game now and then, why, I only chuckle with the pride of play. And now to business. I have been amusing myself with drums and trumpets, and marching and countermarching, with pawns and castles, and bishops and knights, before crying check; and now we'll call the game a draw and begin afresh. What is the time?"

"Three o'clock." said Laroche.

"Good; you will have time to study your map and make your dispositions, and we will drink to your great success."

Grébauval drew from a small cabinet a bottle of red wine, which he opened, and, placing glasses upon the table, said, "Drink, my friend."

"To France!" said Laroche, emptying his goblet.

"To Laroche!" said Grébauval, with a sinister smile.

"Thank you, monsieur," said Laroche.

Grébauval stretched his well-shaped legs in their light, wall-fitting nankeen, flung open his coat, and contemplated Laroche.

"You thought him dead?"

"I did," said Laroche, a little more at his ease since Grébauval's conciliatory speeches and under the pleasant stimulus of his fine red wine.

"I thought so too," said Grébauval. "But he has the damned audacity to live, and just when his wife had put on her mourning gown, too. To-night, Laroche, we must have him, dead or alive—all the better if dead; then there will be no resurrection for Louisette," one of the nicknames for the guillotine.

"He attends the meeting of the White Buttons?"

"To-night, as the clock strikes twelve, they meet. He has arrived from an expedition in connection with the plot to rescue the queen. He had charge of the

military part of the business, and was in communication with the Austrians."

Laroche did not hate de Fournier as Grébauval hated him, but Marie's devotion to the family of the de Louvets was a thorn in his side.

"You have ample evidence of the complicity of Citizen Melville?"

"Ample," said Grébauval, unlocking a drawer close by his chair, and taking out a bundle of papers, which he handed to Laroche.

"Warrants?" said Laroche.

"For the arrest of de Fournier, Daniel, Melville, and every man, woman, and child found on the premises of the Cercle des Boutons Blancs. Take as many men as you require. The Commune will give you a regiment, if you want it."

"A few earth-stoppers," said Laroche, "and just enough to cope with a roomful, eh? How many shall we find there?"

"Fifty, at least. But if you are my true friend, Laroche, have eyes for only one, for the man de Fournier! And you will want all your eyes; his disguises are as numerous as his escapes. They say he is as much at home in the attire of a peasant as he is in that of a brigand. Damn him for coming back!"

"I should know him in a hundred disguises, if it were only from his likeness to you," said Laroche.

"Then au revoir," said Grébauval, rising. "Your hand, Laroche; I wish you luck."

"There is no such thing as luck," said Laroche, "in affairs of this kind. Wish me paramount skill; and I wish you luck of the next generous spy."

"Ah! You don't forgive me?" said Grébauval, with a forced smile.

"I forgive everything that tells for France," said Laroche. "Au revoir!"

"This way," said Grébauval; and he led his visitor through a narrow passage into a suite of private rooms, and down his private stair into the Palais de Justice.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE SIEGE OF THE CERCLE DES BOUTONS BLANCS.

"It is to be a fight, gentlemen," said Melville. "Alençon has betrayed us."

"The beast!" exclaimed Daniel.

"It was to save his wife," said Melville.

"He gives up half a hundred of his comrades, not to mention France, for a woman."

"Helen of Troy cost much more, and couldn't have been half as lovely as Madame Alençon," said Melville. "Let us be thankful we have held together so long; sooner or later every man comes to the end of his tether. Moreover, one trouble treads quickly on the heels of another. Defeated in our supremest plot by the queen herself, it is natural that we should be betrayed by one of ourselves."

"The beast, I say, nevertheless!" exclaimed Daniel; and his expletive was greeted with approving groans and cheers.

"It is half-past eleven, gentlemen," said Melville. "Already two of our exits are stopped by officers dressed as ordinary citizens, but armed to the teeth. At the Windmill Tavern, in the Rue Verte, twenty gendarmes are lying *perdus*. Around the arch, under cover at various points, are a hundred others. They will not move until twelve. We are one member of our expected company short, our friend Rennier, otherwise the gallant Count de Fournier."

"As brave as a lion, and a soldier of discretion," said Daniel. "If he does not come he will be missed, if it is to be a fight."

"It is to be a fight, gentlemen," said Melville, seriously; "and a fight to the death. Let each of us be prepared."

"We are well armed," said Daniel.

"We can only be attacked in force at the main en-

trance. The three other exits are already guarded. As only one man can pass at a time, so two men in each corridor may defend them against a hundred. These posts are filled. But, just as we can hold them from within, aided by barriers and well-contrived barbettes, so may they be held from without against egress."

"Then we are in a trap," said a hitherto silent member.

"No," answered Melville. "We have plenty of room for retreat, over the bodies of our assailants, through the main doorway; and we have the galleries above, that lead to the roofs. The three exits, regarded as secret ways, have been given up to the enemy; but we can certainly prevent him from attacking us in the rear from these points. If he is strongly posted there, he may equally prevent us from getting out that way. At the worst, any man who is driven to seek such relief may take his chance of the struggle. My own view is that we shall make our stand here and fight for the open. In retreat, safe hiding, decent quarters and friendly hands may be found at the Black Eagle, between the Abbaye and the Conciergerie. The nearer the church the further from God, they say; the nearer the prison the safer the retreat, is my experience. And, now, gentlemen, it remains to say who shall command us."

At this moment every one heard the report of a pistol and the clash of arms. The sounds came from the direction of the main entrance.

"An attack on the outer guard," said Melville, "our first line of defence."

They all listened. Then was heard the slamming of a heavy door, and the drawing of bolts and bars.

"The second line of defence lets down its drawbridge," said Melville; "otherwise, closes its gates."

As he spoke, de Fournier, his sword drawn, the blade reeking, dashed in amongst them, followed by the outer guardians of the club, each in fighting trim.

"Welcome, Rennier!" "Vive Rennier!" "God save the White Buttons!" and other cries greeted de Fournier and his companions.

"Thanks, messieurs," said de Fournier. "As I passed beneath the archway I thought I was followed. I paused some time before advancing to the first barrier. As I drew myself carefully out of the darkness and gave the signals, I felt that I had more than one attendant at my heels. I whispered the word before they were near enough to hear it. The stone gave way, but more slowly than usual. Before it could swing back, a rush was made, and it was held *in transitu*, while two men forced their way in. I had my blade ready, but the space was too narrow for much use. However, as I knocked at the second door and gave the word, with my name and the club's warning, a pistol was fired, and I turned to meet several assailants. The opening of the second doorway gave me elbow-room. The faithful janitors joined me. It was quick work. The man who fired had his pistol, smoking, in his hand. Hitherto I had known him for a brave man, though a police agent —Laroche!"

A groan greeted the well-known name.

"I don't think he knew me. 'Coward!' I said, and should have run him through, but one of his comrades dashed at me, and took the blade like a glutton."

De Fournier wiped his sword, as he continued: "Then there was a brief struggle between my two friends and what might be called the rear-guard; the door was suddenly swung back, and here we are."

"An affair of outposts," said Melville; "but the general attack is only a question of minutes. Gentlemen, de Fournier takes command? Is that your wish?

"Yes, de Fournier!" was the response. "De Fournier!"

"Messieurs, I accept," said de Fournier.

"Then permit me to show you the chart of the club and its present defence," said Melville, spreading before him a plan similar to that which Grébauval and Laroche had already examined together.

The Buttons gathered round, many of them looking to their arms, which consisted mostly of swords and pistols, varied with Daniel's favourite weapon, the cudgel.

"Show me the passages of exit," said de Fournier; "and let me see the men on duty there."

"Follow me," said Melville, leaving the general room, while the enemy began to make himself heard at the portal of the club, striking the heavy doors with the butt-ends of muskets, and demanding admission "in the name of the law."

"Aye, you scum of the earth! Batter away. You will need a big gun before those old doors come down, I'm thinking," said Daniel.

"And when they do give way?" asked a grim-looking old fellow, in a strange dress, half brigand, half noble, "What then?"

"We shall receive them with pistols, and, as they reel under the fire, crack their skulls with bludgeons and pink them with rapiers and sabres," responded Daniel, with a grin.

And now de Fournier returned.

"Messieurs," he said, "it is a game that needs no strategy. Melville tells me that we have been betrayed. Our secret is in the hands of the police; the plan of our citadel is in possession of Grébauval; and Laroche, the creature of Robespierre and the Commune, has civil charge of the military force now laying siege to the club. These men give quarter and take prisoners; nevertheless they are fiends compared with the forces in the field, whose motto is 'No quarter and no prisoners.' If Laroche and his crew can save their own skins by taking prisoners, they prefer it; but their 'No quarter' comes when they have taken their prisoners. It was Daniel's watchword, when we fought together for a brief ten minutes, 'Death rather than surrender!' —'Die, but don't be taken!'"

"Daniel was right!" shouted several voices.

"'Die, but don't surrender,' must be our motto; which does not mean retreat, even before overwhelming odds; but if retreat is our better fortune, let no man postpone death by a present surrender. Death, rather than the shackles of Laroche! But, having defeated the enemy, we must evacuate the club; then, as in retreat, every man for himself, by such exits as are

known and can be found. The three you all know of are watched by the enemy. He can attack every man singly; but those in the rear may escape over the bodies of those who fall. By the galleries and upper rooms and lofts of the unused portions of the monastery, along the roofs, and through adjacent houses, there are ways of escape. Take any, and meet opposition with vigour, and only succumb to it with your lives. You know the various haunts of the club. Some are safe: others, at the moment, in doubt. The Black Eagle and Madame Farre's, the widow of the market behind the Palais de Justice, are both of good account. And now, messieurs, the enemy is getting impatient. Five-and-twenty to the right, with our well-beloved brother, Daniel, in command. Five-and-twenty to the left, under our dear and wise counsellor, Monsieur Melville. Take your word from them. They will take theirs from me. Messieurs, to your posts!"

The clubmen marched to the further end of the room. Daniel flung open the inner doors, which were too light for defence. The clubmen ranged themselves on each side of the heavy double barrier of barred and bolted gates, which were shaking under the blows of the besiegers, whose muskets had been supplemented with sledge-hammers.

"The timbers on the right will give way first," said de Fournier. "Monsieur Daniel, your men will know how to deal with the first heads that seek for information there."

"Trust them!" said Daniel.

Powerful arms were now at work, blow upon blow. It was like the thunder of some vast iron-foundry. The wood was as hard as iron; but one of the planks began to give way. Presently, part of it fell inwards, amidst a ringing cheer from without.

But no head sought the opinion of the silent defenders.

On went the battering. Another engine had been added. A baulk of timber had been swung between trestles, and a battering-ram struck the gates at intervals between the blows of the hammers.

"HE RAISED HIS WEAPON WITH A MILITARY FLOURISH, AND BROUGHT IT DOWN UPON THE WRIST OF THE INVESTIGATING HAND."

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"They might have mined it, and blown it to blazes," said Daniel: "but they are playing our game, and it will be a bloody one in five minutes."

The left-hand part of the gates began to give. The staples of the bolts were loosened. Another swing of the battering-ram, and a great panel broke away from its rivets in splinters.

A cheer followed. Then silence.

"The brutes have fled!" said a voice from among the besiegers.

De Fournier laid his finger on his lips.

"There is a bar, as well as a bolt," said the voice. "Sergeant, thrust in your hand and lift it."

An arm was thrust through the opening. The hand began to grapple with the bar.

Daniel looked at de Fournier. De Fournier nodded approvingly to Daniel. The defender nearest the door, on the left, looked at the giant, who passed on to him the nod of the commander-in-chief. Every eye was fixed upon the hand. It was partly illuminated by the light from without. The attackers carried torches. Inside the club the lights had been extinguished, except those that burnt at the exits. The defender who took Daniel's silent command was the man who has been mentioned as dressed in half-peasant, half-noble costume. He was tall, gaunt, and angular. Stepping back, so as to swing his sword conveniently, he raised his weapon with a military flourish, and brought it down upon the wrist of the investigating hand. The latter fell, with a flabby thud, upon the pavement. A scream of pain and a yell of execration announced the effect of the first blow of the defenders, who maintained their silence and kept clear of all possible observation from without.

Another voice was heard.

"Blow the gates down with powder, captain," it said.

It was the voice of Laroche. More than one of the defenders knew it.

"Have patience," was the reply. "Now, once more, comrades!"

There was a stir of feet, and a flashing of lights.

"Now! All together, hammers and rammer!"

Then began a fresh attack upon the trembling gates, with hammers, rammer, and muskets. The gates shook on their great hinges, but they did not give. The staples of a bolt were loosened, however, and presently a big square piece of planking surrendered to the battering-ram. It parted in splinters. There was almost room for a man to enter.

"Don't wait for the word," said de Fournier, in a loud whisper; "when they storm, let the nearest men go for the nearest heads; and don't overcrowd each other."

As he spoke, half of the left-hand gate fell with a crash, and there was a rush into the breach. It was met with a concentrated pistol fire, that staggered the assailants and cleared the breach.

The first shout of defiance escaped the defenders. Yells, curses, words of command, from without, drowned the shouts within. A wrangle between the commander of the gendarmes and his civil chief, Laroche, varied the cries of the wounded and the maddened assailants. Then a fresh effort to break down the remainder of the door was made. In a few minutes the tottering timbers of the left gate fell. The other half still remained fixed in its staples and bolts. The besiegers resolved to charge through the opening. This made the defence easier for the moment. The enemy fired a volley into the breach, and charged. They were met with fire and sword and club with a promptitude that drove them back howling.

A second and a third charge were made, with unbounded pluck and persistence. The third onslaught gave them a footing inside the assembly room of the club, which had originally been the monks' refectory. The torches of the besiegers flashed upon fifty faces glowing with heroic endeavour.

The defenders hurled the oncomers right and left, and blocked the way of the rear ranks with dead and dying. The old walls rang with the clash of arms, varied by dropping pistol-shots and the blows of

Daniel's club, that swung to and fro, a veritable pendulum of death.

Torches blazed upon the floor, among writhing men and silent.

Melville, with his back against a stone jamb of the fireplace, kept a clear space around him, barred in by a circle of the dying and the dead.

De Fournier fought like a tiger, now high above the rest, standing on his prostrate foes, now down upon the level, in deadly wrestling. Men fell on both sides, amidst the crash of glass and the breaking of furniture; always with lurid lights and smoking torches. The room of assembly was a shambles.

Laroche, after some fumbling, protected by a dozen bayonets, succeeded in opening the right-hand gate, and reinforcements of the Commune's troops poured in.

"Each for himself!" shouted de Fournier, the signal for retreat; and thereupon, as if by magic, the despairing defenders disappeared, leaving their assailants in full possession of the club-room and its dead members, for not one of those who had fallen but had breathed his last. The motto, "Death rather than surrender," had been observed.

And now there were hand-to-hand fights at the doors of the three exits, and running encounters along the less-invested galleries. Laroche had kept well within the shaded protection of the right-hand gate, his eyes upon de Fournier, ready for either emergency, the death of his man or his attempted flight. The moment de Fournier gave the word, "Each for himself," Laroche pushed his way through the ghastly obstructions with two chosen followers and dashed after the count, who, bleeding as he retreated, made for the gallery stairways to the roof. At an angle of the gallery he turned and struck down Laroche's torch-bearer, and then, doubling, took another way, while Laroche and his companion blundered on ahead.

Within half an hour of the words "Each for himself," twenty White Buttons were scattered over the region about the Rue de la Monnaie and the Pont-Neuf, seeking shelter. De Fournier found his way to the Black Eagle,

almost within the double shadows of the Abbaye and the Conciergerie, and near enough to hear their clocks strike the first hour of daylight.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THREE WOMEN.

MATHILDE, in a long sombre gown, received Marie Bruyset in the Louis Quatorze boudoir, which had been the favourite room of the mother of de Fournier.

The countess, widowed as she believed, took her humble friend in her arms and kissed her.

"It is good of you to come," she said, in a low voice. "I have not seen a friendly face for many weary days."

Marie, attuning her own sweet voice to the other's pathetic tone, begged madame to be assured that it was a pleasure, as it was an honour, to be with her.

"You have tried to come before, Once I saw you, within the gates, turned back by the guard,—I might say the gaoler."

"Nay, dear madame, it is not so bad as that. If you are a prisoner, at least you are not tortured with a stone cell and vile surroundings, as the good queen is."

Then Marie told Mathilde all about the plot to rescue her majesty, and the self-sacrificing refusal of the proffered aid. She did not enter into any details touching her own share in the enterprise, but at once sounded Mathilde in regard to any views she might entertain of trying to terminate her present enforced occupation of the Hôtel de Fournier.

Mathilde in her replies gave Marie to understand that she had given up all hope of anything relating to her own interests. If she could help her father she would be willing to make almost any sacrifice that fate might demand of her. She could but die at last.

"And your mother, madame la comtesse?" said Marie, presently.

"The Citoyenne Louvet," Mathilde replied, pathetically, "is permitted to go out. She is recognised as one of the people, visits among the set that receives the Citizens Robespierre and St. Just, and once a week they and others are among her guests. At first I was excused from being present because I obstinately refused to leave my room on those occasions, and now it is permitted to me to withdraw because I am in mourning. My mother's head is turned. I believe she loves me dearly in her way; and it is wonderful what sacrifices a mother will make for her child. At present her chief hope is to save the duke; but there is only one way, alas!"

"And that is——?"

"Don't ask me, dear friend, don't ask me!" said Mathilde, with a weary look in her dull eyes that had once been so bright and full of the enjoyment of life.

"I must help you in some way," said Marie. "We will lay our heads together. Laroche, my father, has something of that feeling which animates the duchess. He loves me; though sometimes I believe—God forgive me!—that I hate him."

"Don't say that; he is your father," the countess replied.

"You don't know what reason I have to hate him; it is no excuse for murder that a man loves his daughter."

"But what he does he believes to be his duty. Considering his position, he was kind to us on our way from Honfleur to Paris."

"Kind!" said Marie, scornfully. "But he arrested you, and dragged you back to misery, and the count to an untimely death. I cannot forgive him for that."

"It is not for you to judge, dear," said Mathilde. "God is the arbiter."

"My father, Laroche, knew of the massacres at the prisons; knew and permitted them; aided them, perhaps," said Marie. "And Grébauval was present to

encourage the assassins before they started on their murderous work."

It was a good thing, perhaps, that Laroche had been prevented from secreting himself where he could hear this conversation. He was engaged in active business elsewhere, the result of which had a more momentous influence upon the lives of Marie and the countess than they could have possibly dreamed or imagined.

"It is not possible that any one can overhear us?" said Marie, with a sudden and sharp note of interrogation.

"No. I searched the room and the next one, where I sleep, when I came here; and there is an old servant, who also reassured me. She knew my dear Henri when he was a child."

"Old servants have proved the worst of enemies to the families whose bread they have eaten all their lives. Old men who fell at the Conciergerie were denounced by their most faithful retainers, as they were called."

"We are safe here," said Mathilde, "if one can be safe anywhere. But I am too selfish; I have not asked after Jaffray Ellicott. Is he still free from suspicion?"

"Yes, so far as any one can be; the men in power are beginning to suspect each other. They say Danton, Marat, and Robespierre have quarrelled, but Laroche denies it, though he is continually warning me. Jaffray is shrewd and full of resource. It is the natural aptitude of his nation. He knows how to conceal his thoughts and weigh his words. Grébauval trusts him entirely."

"But he is true to his service?"

"In a general way, yes. He would have run grave risks for the dear count: he would carry his life in his hand for you."

"May the Mother of God watch over him!" said Mathilde.

"He dreams of seeing you and the duke and duchess at peace beyond the seas; believes it is possible to arrange it; and often talks of a little bay he calls St. Margaret's, with chalk cliffs about it, and a village,

where he was born. His mother used to tell him of it. He has some little patrimony there, he believes, and a cottage that belonged to his father. They have no revolutions over there in England, he says. He lost his father and mother, you know, madame, in the insurrectionary war of America."

"Yes; my dear Henri once told me the story, and how he saved him from an Indian's hatchet; and never saw him again, after he left America, until the fatal day of the Bastille."

"General Lafayette took an interest in him, and Grébauval brought him to France; he was then a little boy."

"But a fine handsome fellow now. When shall I have the satisfaction of asking you to let me add something to his wife's dower, eh, Marie?"

Mathilde smiled in a sad way as she asked the question and stroked Marie's head. The girl was sitting on a low seat by the side of Mathilde's chair.

"Oh, it is not to be thought of until all these troubles are over."

"May I come in?" said a voice, as the portière at the further end of the room was moved, and the Citoyenne Louvet entered, dressed in the costume of the time most favoured by the Republicans, but with some small tokens of mourning in the decoration of it. Madame dared not be too conspicuous in any symbol of sorrow for a *ci-devant* who had lifted his sword against the people.

"Oh, it is the Citoyenne Bruyset," she said, advancing towards Marie, who kissed her hand. "Well, I am glad. She is a young woman of common sense, and knows the world. Yes, young as you are, citoyenne, you must have seen a great deal of this beloved Paris of ours."

"Yes, madame," said Marie.

"Give me a chair, child."

Marie placed a chair for her.

"And how is my Mathilde?" she said. "Better, I hope. I have hardly had time to kiss you, my love, to-day; but, oh, I have been so busy! There are ter-

rible things going on, and worse is to happen; and if Mathilde would only listen to reason and accept the inevitable the duke would be released, and I could secure the lives and the peace of every one of us. Citizen Grébauval is even willing, if Mathilde will change her state, to travel with us to the coast and see us safely shipped for England, following as soon as he can make his arrangements to do so. And he is willing that such ceremony as is necessary shall be strictly private, quite a family affair; and when one thinks of how differently events would have fallen out if my advice had been taken originally——"

"Oh, don't!" said Mathilde, her pale face flushing for a moment to become instantly afterwards death-like.

Madame had addressed her reflections to no one in particular. They were intended for Mathilde and Marie, but she looked at neither of them. She unburthened her thoughts and wishes with all her customary volubility, and yet with something approaching to the manner of severe and affectionate solicitude.

"But, my dear," she went on, "here is your father in prison and condemned; yes, literally condemned; and Joseph with him, as faithful a creature as ever lived; and any day, any moment, may be their last. Think of it; it is too dreadful; and the duke defiant to the last, defiant before the Tribunal as he would be if Sanson called out his name."

"Oh, mother!" gasped Mathilde, pressing her hands over her face.

Marie could say nothing. Once she looked rebukingly at the duchess, but without making any impression upon her.

"Yes, it is very well to say 'Oh, mother!' but ejaculations do no good, prayers do no good, bribery does no good: there is only one way. I am not asking for my own life; that is of no account, and it is no longer in jeopardy; I am asking for the duke's, for Joseph's, and for your own, my dear, best-loved Mathilde. Grébauval's is but one voice, and there are three more potent than his own; it is only his hoarded gold, his

devotion to the people, and his high courage that keep him paramount as an adviser, trusted alike by the Commune and the Committee; and he has never wavered in his attachment to you, never, from the first moment he saw you, and before poor Henri spoke to the duke and me of his pretensions. If you only said seriously that you would give him an answer, say in a week, at least your father might go free. The Deputy Grébauval would even run counter to Marat and Fouquier-Tinville and other personal influences if you would meet him thus far. Surely it is not too much for a father and mother to ask of their daughter, their only child?"

"You are overwhelmed at all this, my poor friend," said Mathilde, in response to the gentle touch of Marie, who had crept to her chair, and, taking her hand, had pressed it to her lips, the only token of sympathy and sorrow she knew how to show towards her at the moment. "It sounded new in your presence; it was something strange for some other person to hear my mother's terrible appeal. But oh, my God, I have been listening to it every day, it seems to me, for years."

"Don't exaggerate, my dear Mathilde," said madame; but Mathilde paid no attention to the remark.

"I hear it continually, dream it, listen to it, when my mother is not here; and there can only be one answer to it, unless it were that I gave myself to this man and killed myself afterwards. But, oh, God knows I cannot do that! God knows! Our Blessed Mary knows!"

Then, suddenly rising to her feet, she turned upon her mother, with wide open eyes, which madame faced with a strange resolution of opposition.

"How dare you, mother, ask me to do such a thing? How dare you, when you know all?"

It might have driven a less restrained intellect than Mathilde's off its balance to hear the duchess calmly answer, in the same unimpassioned rhetorical manner as before, "I am not pleading for myself, and I said there is nothing a dutiful daughter should not do to save the life of a parent, and——"

Mathilde stood wonderingly looking at her mother, and Marie spoke for the first time.

"Does the duke desire madame the countess to make this sacrifice, madame?"

"The duke is in no position to express his desires; he is a prisoner——"

"But I will go and see him."

"They will not permit you to see him; and he does not wish to see any one, not even his wife, for he has already given that reply himself to my application. He is too noble to wish to coerce his child, so he prefers to die without a word."

"Let me speak with him, madame. I can; I have permission to go into the court-yard of the prison when I please, and it is not difficult for me to see a prisoner——"

"That is as you wish. I can only say, by way of conclusion, that the Citizen Grébauval will come here for his final answer this evening."

"Is he so great a coward?" exclaimed Marie.

"Young woman, your remark is inopportune, not to say impertinent. Pray don't presume on our condescension!"

"Condescension, citoyenne!" said Marie, with assumed indignation. "Liberty, equality, fraternity, are the watchwords of the Republic. I do not presume in addressing you upon equal terms; you, madame, presume when you question that right."

"Oh, forgive me, forgive," said the duchess, alarmed at the little protestant. "Pardon: I had forgotten myself; you are quite right; pray be generous and forgive me."

"Oh, yes, no offence, madame, no offence," said Marie; "but we must be on one side or the other."

"The Citizen Grébauval's own motto: he has repeated it to me many a time. You are a wise little thing. Very well, then I will leave you to give my poor misguided daughter your very best advice. I think the Citizen Grébauval said he would call at six o'clock."

She stood on tiptoe to reach Mathilde's cheeks (which were now wet with relieving tears), and, gathering her trailing skirts together, left the room.

CHAPTER XLV.

GRÉBAUVAL PLAYS HIS LAST CARD.

WHEN Marie had put on her hat and pinned her frilled cross-over about her pretty shoulders and said "good-bye" to the countess, she took her way along the waxed corridors and down the broad staircase to the inner court-yard, where she was informed that, for the present, no one was permitted to leave the house.

"But I am a visitor," said Marie.

"My orders are peremptory," replied the gendarme.

"I am Citizen Laroche's daughter."

"It makes no difference, mademoiselle," said the gendarme; and Marie returned to the countess.

"Oh, I am very glad," said Mathilde, "if it causes you no inconvenience."

"Only that I wished to go to the Conciergerie and speak to the duke."

"There is no influence that can save him, I believe, unless it is exercised by the man Grébauval," Mathilde replied, adding, with a painful sigh, "Oh, Marie, my child, better death than so much anguish; better death, if we could go together, I and my father, since Henri has gone before us, and my mother has given herself over to our enemies. What shall we do?"

"Cannot I leave the hôtel by some secret way?"

"Every nook and corner of the place is watched and guarded," said Mathilde.

As she spoke, the low chimes of a clock were heard. Mathilde started.

"Six," she said, "the hour when we are to know our fate. Come to my chamber, Marie; you will be at hand if I need you, and you will remain to be my counsellor and friend when the interview is over."

"Dear countess!" said Marie. "It is our beloved Mary who has put it into the heart of the officer to send me back to you."

"You understand the sacrifice my mother demands of me?"

"Yes."

"My father's life and my own are to be the reward of my consent. I despise myself when I confess to you that, Henri dead, I have prayed for strength to accept the martyrdom, if it be His will; have appealed to God that He may reveal it to me if it be for some sin or in the cause of some unfathomable virtue that He demands this sacrifice."

"My dear sweet lady!" said Marie, gazing into the suffering eyes of her miserable companion.

"I don't ask you to advise me," said Mathilde, answering the thought that was in Marie's mind. "How can I? How can any one advise me? I think of my father ascending the scaffold, and my heart yields. I think of the spirit of my dead Henri hovering over me, and I am strong again."

"Monsieur the deputy Grébauval," said Mathilde's servant, entering upon a warning signal and permission given to approach. "He has an appointment, he says, with you."

"Let him come in," said Mathilde.

"Yes, madame la comtesse," said the man.

"Marie, my dear friend, go to my chamber; if I call you, come to me; if not, remain until I shall come to you."

The deputy entered with a gracious bow, his three-cornered hat under his arm, his toilette worthy of an exquisite, but still wearing his tricolour sash. His hair had been carefully dressed; his face, closely shaven, had, however, upon the chin and cheeks just a bluish hue, in keeping with his swarthy complexion. His eyes were unusually bright, and he bade Mathilde "Good day." She was conscious of a strange thrill that came with the sudden thought of how much he was like her dead Henri. Then she blushed with shame at the recognition of the likeness, and she noted the difference in certain physical details of manner and speech and carriage; but as her glance took in his figure at the further end of the room, the peculiar similarity between

the man she hated and the one whom she had loved was startling.

She gave him her hand. He kissed it, and felt the slight shudder the contact sent through the woman's sensitive frame. At the same time he noticed the large, eloquent, languishing eyes, the dainty mouth, the haughty lips, the graceful figure, the rounded bust; and he gloated over her apparent fear of him.

Moreover, he had only recently dined with Robespierre and his sister, and, in honour of Grébauval's expressed intention of bringing madame the pretty widow to her senses, and, further, of accepting the delegation to the Army of La Vendée, which Marat and Danton had agreed with Robespierre to be a desirable move, the saviour of the people had deigned to be sympathetic and convivial. He had foregone his customary moderation, and opened an extra bottle, and madame his sister had provided a more than ordinarily good dinner.

Grébauval had vowed that he would not only win the widow of de Fournier but would make his journey to La Vendée their honeymoon. This, however, was confided to Robespierre after his sister had left them to their coffee and business conversation.

The truth is that Robespierre was very willing to have Grébauval out of the way. He knew too much. There had been differences of late between the three masters of Paris, and Robespierre did not care to irritate Marat with a continual leaning to the opinions of Grébauval, nor to have Grébauval, in the case of a split, go over to Marat or Danton, or both; nor did the other two care much for Grébauval: he had been of great use to all of them, both financially and with legal and worldly advice. He was a born man of affairs, and in the first days of the Revolution had been sincere in his alliance with its prompters and leaders, and he was not the least important of its organisers and directors.

While it had been deemed advisable that the war in La Vendée should be conducted with more severity and more impressive results for the Republic than hitherto, Grébauval had been elected to represent the wishes and

commands of the government of the Committee, as much with a view to be relieved of his presence in Paris as for his diplomatic skill, his fidelity to the Republic, and his mental capacity and resource. It had been left to him to start as quickly as was possible; and he had spoken of his probable departure within a matter of days, or even hours. It was in his mind on the eve of his journey to bring Mathilde to her knees or to the scaffold. His pride and his passions were in league against her; and his pride had at last sunk to the level of the pride that moved the dark souls of Marat and Danton and stirred the pulse of Fouquier-Tinville. Love had struggled with it, but the pinions of the fateful god were bedraggled with the mud and ooze of Grébauval's mental environment, and such sparks of the sacred fire as had for some time smouldered in his breast had been stamped out by disappointment and a despotic lust of authority.

"Your mother has, no doubt, explained my mission," said Mathilde's admirer; "and it is a pleasure to know that I have her sympathy."

Mathilde acknowledged the remark with an inclination of the head.

"I gather as much from the fact that I find you willing to receive me," he said.

"I am bound to hear what you have to say," she replied, in a soft, submissive voice. "Will you not be seated?"

She had remained standing until she indicated a seat which she desired him to occupy. and sat down herself. He moved his chair a little nearer to her. As he did so he said, "Don't say you are bound to hear me: it implies unwillingness."

"Our interview is hampered by conditions," said Mathilde, still with the same submissive manner.

"Make your own conditions, my dear madame, if they may go with your gracious consent to my suit, my humble suit,—my loving suit, let me say; and you know with what sincerity I say this, for I have proved my faith by years of devotion."

If there is not always truth in wine, there is courage,

there is often eloquence, and sometimes, alas, there is an inspiration of cruelty.

"I have yet to learn what your proposals are," said Mathilde, calm as a statue, and nearly as white as one.

"You know that for years I have loved you," Grébauval replied, "and you will forgive me for believing that at one time my only obstacle to your favour was a rival who has been removed by the fortune of war, to the caprices of which we are all subject. Nay, dear madame, I only recall to you the fact that you are free, in justification of the renewal of a proposal I had the honour to make to you, and with your mother's consent, when you were a girl,—but not more lovely, permit me to say, than you are at this moment, in your early womanhood."

Mathilde moved uneasily for a moment, and an appealing expression came into her eyes.

"But I pain you," said Grébauval, making his voice as soft and sympathetic as was possible with an organ so much coarser than the musical voice she had been accustomed to in Henri.

"Continue, if you please," she said.

"What can I say, madame, that you do not already know? My dearest ambition is to make you my wife. Ask me what you will in return for your hand, and there is nothing within the bounds of possibility that I will not accomplish for you and yours."

As he spoke, his face glowed. He felt his pulse beat and his heart thump against his breast, so electrical was the influence of what seemed to be a half-consenting smile that passed over Mathilde's face, upon a nature even such as that of the man who had stood beside the steersman at the helm of the devastating ship of the Revolutionary Tribunal, with its sanguinary prow and its scorching fires. But he mistook the significance of the glimpse of light he thought he had seen flit over the wintry landscape of Mathilde's face. She had for a moment allowed the influence of a passing thought of her dead lord to flicker in her eyes, but the signal was not one to justify Grébauval's hopes.

"If I asked you first for the freedom of my father

and my own liberty?" she said, looking at him for the first time.

"Couple it with the promise that at the same time you will undergo a ceremony of marriage with me, and it is done," he said, moving his chair still a little nearer to her own.

"Not without?" she asked.

"Give me the right to the charge of your future," he replied, "and I will undertake to obtain your release from surveillance here, obtain your father's freedom, provide him and you and your mother, and such servants as you may select, with safe escort to the coast, and with a ship for England; and, furthermore, do all that lies in my power to obtain for you, when the time is ripe, such restitution of property and estates as present necessary confiscation may render possible."

Grébauval spoke rapidly, but with a clear view of the situation in its present and future possibilities.

"And if I do not consent?" she asked, her lips tightening.

"Nay, my dear madame—let me say Mathilde," he exclaimed, "do not say if; let there be no 'ifs' between you and me, between the lover and the object of his life's devotion. You stop the very beating of my heart when you say 'if.'"

He half rose from his seat, and put out his hand as if to touch her.

She did not shrink, but he paused to look into her eyes. They made no response of liking or of fear. But he felt that they were beautiful, and his own wandered over her bosom and the whiteness of her neck.

"I must say 'if;' life is full of 'ifs,'" she said, with a sigh; "and between you and me there is an 'if' with blood upon it, and the shadow of the scaffold."

He could see that she was repressing her emotion. He could see that, despite all her calmness, there was a raging fever in her heart. Her lips quivered as she spoke, her breath came quickly, and she pressed the arm of her chair with her left hand, letting her right fall by her side.

Passion in his heart and the fumes of wine mounting

to his head, he rose to his feet, stooped by her side, seized her hand and pressed it to his lips. She made no resistance.

"My own!" he said, "my beloved, I will remove every shadow from your path, the world shall be a garden of flowers, there shall not be a wish you shall not achieve before the wish itself is half conceived."

"If?" she said, in response, repressing her indignation. "If——"

"If you give me the privilege to honour your commands."

"And if I do not, what then, monsieur?" she said, rising to her feet, her face flushed. "What then?"

"But you will consent," he said, with a new kind of manner. "You will consent!"

"I said if I do not?" she repeated.

"But we will have no 'ifs' nor 'buts'!" he exclaimed, in a thick whisper, and taking her hand once more, but this time as if rather to control her movements than in the way of homage. "You will say yes; you must, my darling; I love you, can make you happy, rich, feared, powerful!" And he suddenly took her round the waist.

She felt his hot breath upon her cheek, and yet she neither struggled nor cried out. Her unresisting attitude appeared to check him. He let her go. She only moved a step or two from him.

"Have you so poor an opinion of my love to think that, only a few days widowed, I can so soon take up the rôle of wife again?" she said, determined to make a last appeal to whatever good might still be left in the man's nature. "And if you love me as you say, will you not give me time and freedom to consult my heart and act upon its dictates? Oh, monsieur,—let me say friend,—will you not be magnanimous? Your rival is dead. You honour me by still offering me your name and fortune. I am not insensible to the compliment. Give me my father, give me the freedom you spoke of, the escort, the passports, the ship, and I will tax my gratitude to the utmost in considering what I shall say to your honourable proposals."

"There are ships at sea that never come into port, dear madame," said Grébauval, in a tone of banter, "and I fear I should never see your bright sail again once you were running before the wind of uncontrolled liberty, with all your guns on board. No, Mathilde, I love you too well to run the risk of losing you."

"Love is noble; it makes sacrifices; it is self-denying; it does not seize the hand that denies; it is patient, it makes gifts, it supplicates, it does not command; it honours a woman's love of parents; it seeks to prove its magnanimity before it asks for the supreme reward; it——"

"Mon Dieu!" exclaimed Grébauval. "I have been all that,—done all that,—suffered all that! I can wait no longer. The time comes to all men and women; it has come to us. Your hand in mine, you have everything to gain; I nothing beyond the joy of calling you mine. It is enough. Fortune divides her favours fairly. For you freedom, a father rescued from the scaffold, a mother who loves you, the world at your feet; for me the privilege to be your slave, who only seeks to serve you."

"The slave obeys; he does not dictate terms," said Mathilde.

"Not until he enters upon the rôle of slave; I ask for the shackles; then I bend, my neck is at your feet."

This was said, however, with a mental reservation that Mathilde understood well enough.

"But I have no voice in this freak of fortune; I am to accept——"

"Say this reward of virtue," interposed Grébauval, before she had finished her sentence.

"Call it what you will," she answered, "the end seems to be the same."

"What other end can an ardent lover desire? And surely patience is a virtue; so let us not call it this freak of fortune, but this reward of virtue. My dear madame, my dear Mathilde, my love, your word shall dictate every condition that your mind can fancy to give our union distinction and carpet your path with roses."

"When the bond is signed, not before?" she said.

"When the bond is signed, and you wear the pledge of it on this generous hand," he said, bending over her fair fingers and kissing them with something of a really gallant air, unlike his previous manner.

But this time Mathilde withdrew her hand. She had played his passion in every way, angled for the smallest sign of sympathy, striven to touch his manhood with womanly gentleness, but she saw that it was all useless, and now she took the tone her heart and mind approved.

"Let there be an end of this, Monsieur Grébauval," she said, in a voice that no longer supplicated, that was no longer gentle or submissive. "You know my conditions, the conditions under which I will consider your proposals."

"Yes, I understand them," he said. "But you ask too much."

"And you, monsieur, you grant too little."

"Then we have been wasting our time?" he answered.

"I fear we have. And yet I hoped at one moment that you might relent."

"I, too, was hopeful on my side once, when you appeared to encourage my suit. It seems I was a fool. Then let us waste no more time. I have a priest and witnesses close by, Mathilde. They are at our service; and, with or without them, I have come to stay."

There was a devilish emphasis in the words. He flung them at her one by one. They stabbed her where she stood. And now all the woman's nature took alarm.

"What!" she exclaimed, starting back.

"I am here to make you my wife or my mistress; and you are here to make your choice of either position."

"Man, you are mad!" she exclaimed, with undisguised agitation.

"No, I have been mad. To-morrow or next day we leave France, you and I, and, if you choose, your mother and father; I go to La Vendée, but you and

they shall go to England and await my coming. Are you listening?"

"I am listening," she said.

"But to-night you are to be mine, to-night! You are listening?"

"I have listened to you long enough. Do you now listen to me."

He shrugged his shoulders and said, "I am all attention."

"I will neither be your wife nor your mistress, now or ever. I have already shamed myself sufficiently by permitting you to address me in terms of love. You may kill me, monsieur le député Grébauval, but you can never make me your wife, nor the no less odious thing you would call your mistress. Death is bliss compared with such conditions of life."

It was in Grébauval's thoughts for a moment to rush upon her and seize her, to rob her lips of the kisses his passion coveted. But there was something so dignified in her defiant attitude that he cowered beneath the scorn of her eyes and the wild look in them that meant a physical struggle not less obstinate than their mental defiance should he venture to approach her.

"Then let it be death!" he said, in a hoarse low voice; "let it be death and end it!"

He turned from her, walked to the furthermost end of the room, the door of which he had furtively locked when he came in, and opened it. Mathilde, thinking he had gone, called to Marie, for, the strain upon her relaxed, she felt as if she were about to faint.

With the entrance of Marie, Grébauval returned. A tramp of heavy feet followed him. A word of command was heard, and a commissary of police, a gendarme by his side, entered the room, four soldiers halting within the doorway.

"I propose, Citizen Commissary, to give madame one last opportunity of relieving you from your painful duty," said Grébauval, who thereupon, advancing to Mathilde and showing no surprise at the presence of Marie—of whose visit to the house he was aware—

"'ARREST ME!' EXCLAIMED MARIE. 'YOU ARE A FOOL!'"

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addressed the countess, "Madame, it is for you to say how this meeting shall end."

"You have had my answer," Mathilde replied.

Grébauval stepped back; and the commissary, without another word, said, "Mathilde Fournier, *ci-devant* countess, I arrest you for conspiring against the Republic, one and indivisible; and you, Marie Laroche, for aiding and abetting the said Mathilde Fournier in the same"

"Arrest me!" exclaimed Marie. "You are a fool!"

"Thank you, mademoiselle."

"And do you mean to say, Citizen Grébauval, that you permit this outrage? And just because madame la comtesse can't make up her mind to marry you?"

"It is because madame can make up her mind not to do so," said Mathilde. "But let us be patient, Marie. We——"

Marie interrupted the countess, a liberty she would not have taken under ordinary circumstances for the world.

"Be patient!" she exclaimed. "Nonsense! that's what they like, these cowards! How dare you, Monsieur Grébauval, be so cruel, so dishonourable?"

"Stand aside," said the commissary of police. "Where is the Citoyenne Louvet, *ci-devant* duchess?"

"*Ci-devant*, indeed! Oh, you jack-in-office, with your *ci-devants!* What fools you will look when the Austrians come in and hang you all to the lantern, all of you they haven't time to guillotine."

"Cease, for your own sake, Marie!" said Grébauval. "Your father has warned you that your tongue may lose you your head."

"My head will be in better company when I have lost it than with such as you and your gang, monsieur le député Grébauval, magistrate, judge, and creature of Robespierre."

"Oh, silence, Marie! silence!" said Mathilde.

Then was heard a voice upon the stairs in altercation with another. It was a woman's voice defying a man.

"Don't tell me," the duchess was saying as she entered the room, "don't tell me that the Deputy Grébau-

val has given any such orders. I tell you I will have your epaulettes cut off for this affront!"

Half-way down the room she paused to take in the unexpected and surprising picture before her.

"Why, Grébauval, my friend—my dear friend—what is the matter?"

"You must ask this good citizen," said Grébauval, indicating the police officer.

"Are you the Citoyenne Louvet, madame?" asked the official.

"Of course I am, you silly fellow; and what then?"

"Madame, I have the painful duty to arrest you, in the name of the law, for treason against the Republic."

"Arrest me for treason! An enemy to the Republic, me, the Citoyenne Louvet, the friend of the Deputy Grébauval, of Citizen Robespierre, of St. Just, and——"

She became giddy with the very thought of it.

"Give me your arm, Grébauval," she said.

He conducted her to a sofa.

"Am I dreaming? Is it true? They are to arrest me!"

"I fear so," said Grébauval.

"Then Mathilde has refused you?" she said, sinking upon the couch. "She has preferred that her father should die—our only child? And you, Grébauval, you do not relent, eh? You won't forgive her, eh? Couldn't you make this little sacrifice for two old people and their child? Couldn't you? Couldn't you?"

He made no answer, but sat in a listless, indifferent way by her side.

"Couldn't you find it in your heart to forgive her?" she said, rising to her feet and standing over him, looking a head taller than usual, her face lighting up into a glow of heroism, her grey hair thick about her forehead, and her once fair and lovely features handsomer than ever. Mathilde remembered them under the influence of her despair and the opening of the flood-gates of her true nobility of feeling and sentiment, which had hitherto been dammed up by the muddy banks of a specious diplomacy. "Couldn't you, in your black heart, find one drop of patience for a vir-

tuous woman who shrinks from mating with a satyr, a fiend, the scab of a base intrigue? Does she prefer death? Then so do I! Does she love me less that in my fear for her, in my desire to spare her father the pangs of an untimely and cruel death, I condescended to associate with this parasite of a great cause? Does she love me the less for all this humiliation?"

"No, my mother!" exclaimed Mathilde, taking her mother into her arms, in a passion of tears. "No, dearest, no! I always loved you, but never so much as now; dear, dear mother!"

The two woman sobbed together and swayed to and fro with a kind of joyousness that unmanned the officer, while Marie flung herself upon her knees before Grébauval, who still kept his seat and held his peace.

"Oh, my God! Forgive my wild words, or kill me for her. But save them, Grébauval, save them! God will forgive you for everything else; but save them!"

"Damn them both, and you too!" exclaimed Grébauval, pushing her aside and confronting the officer.

"You know your duty; do it!" he said, as he stalked out of the room, no one stirring until the last sound of his footfalls upon the stairway had died out with all their hopes.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE GUILLOTINE.

De Fournier found a comfortable bed at the Black Eagle, and slept. Physical nature was worn out. It would have rested on a stone pillow. Soldiers sleep on the hardest couch and under the coldest sky. De Fournier had only time to get out of his boots and fling off his jacket before he became oblivious to all the world.

He did not see, even in his dreams, the sad sight of his dear friend the Duke de Louvet and the faithful Joseph going to their death. Lying down at daybreak,

de Fournier slept on until long after noon, at which hour Joseph and his master were led forth from their cells in the Conciergerie, with other martyrs of the Revolution, to their last sleep of all.

There had been no leave-taking to distress the two heroes, the duke and Joseph. None of their friends or relatives had been informed of the day or hour of their execution.

"It is well," said the duke; "they would have suffered more than we do, Joseph."

"Yes, monsieur le duc, it is better as it is."

"Joseph, you are a brave man; you will meet your reward in heaven."

"Thank you, monsieur," said Joseph; "I am content. I have your approval, and we go on our last journey together."

"Two true friends." said the duke, with a tremor in his voice that he could not control.

"Yes, monsieur; there never was a time when you were not my best friend."

"If ever I have hurt you by a harsh word, Joseph, you forgive me."

"You have never uttered a harsh word to me," said Joseph.

"A hasty word, perhaps, Joseph?"

"Well, say a hasty word, monsieur," Joseph replied, "when I merited a harsh one; you never were in fault, so I have nothing to forgive."

"But if you had anything to forgive, Joseph?"

"Then I should forgive it with all my heart."

"Thank you, Joseph," said the duke, taking his servant's hand as they passed down the stairway into the court-yard.

Here the prisoners behind the railing on both sides, men and women, bent their heads, and some knelt down in prayer.

"I am glad Mathilde is not here," said the duke; "I am glad they have not told my wife."

"Yes, dear monsieur," said Joseph. "I have no wife nor child. It is kind that they let me attend you to the last, these men who are otherwise so cruel."

"They are mad, Joseph, mad," said the duke. "One of these days they will be eaten up by their successors, who will be madder than they."

"We are wanted now," said Joseph, as Sanson, the chief priest of the guillotine, standing amidst his assistants, pointed to the stools upon which they were to sit while they were prepared for the tumbrels, that were already drawn up in the outer prison-yard, awaiting their passengers.

The duke, bowing to the fierce-looking attendants of Sanson, took his seat. Joseph was permitted to sit by his side. Within a few moments the hair of both fell from the shears of the barbers of Louisette, and the duke's high collars were cut down, so as to leave his neck open for the easier and more certain fall of the knife.

Then the hands of the prisoners were tied behind them, and they were moved forward through the gates into the outer prison-yard.

There was some commotion of preparation, confusion of voices and commands, backing of horses, and selecting of numbers. The order of procession was, however, quickly arranged. The gates were opened. Here were posted an advance- and a rear-guard of troops. The former fell into fours, and marched. The rear-guard awaited the tumbrels. They were received with inhuman shouts and yells by a vast concourse of men and women, intoxicated with morbid emotions, drunk with homicidal mania, vengeful, miserable wretches, flinging up their bare arms, dancing and yelling the Carmagnole, women with breasts bared to the sharp air that was bleak and cutting, despite the sunshine that glittered upon the keen blades of the troops and spotted the ends of pikes with star-like glints of light in which there were splashes of red. It was a wild, mixed, motley crowd, with flying hair and red caps, with tricolour ribbons and rags of every hue; with young women, almost girls, who might have been beautiful but for their distorted features; with grim, raw-boned amazons, and gaunt, lantern-jawed men in every kind of costume, cocked hats and round tall hats and no hats, and armed with

muskets, pikes, scythes, swords, and here and there a pitchfork.

Amongst them was Madame Angélique, thinner and more like a witch than ever. She chanted her biblical maledictions, but her voice was hoarse. She had lost her grim charm. Nobody heeded her. Now and then she looked around upon the scene with strange inquiring glances. She was a maniac, and was no longer responsible to herself or to humanity generally.

There was one other spectator among the crowd in whom we are interested. It was Pierre Grappin, Madame Angélique's husband. If we had not named him, you would not have recognised him, so changed was he, so battered. The wound which he received in the fight near the Lion d'Or had ripped his face almost in twain; he had, indeed, a divided countenance. Some people laughed at it. The withering course of the enemy's bullet had given it the effect of a curious grin; but the loving hands of Pierre's sister had saved the man's life, and his heart was just as good as ever. Moreover, the mask with which he was now provided had probably saved him from the death to which the duke and Joseph were heroically marching. Nor was Pierre less muscular, less broad in the chest, less powerful in the arms,—as we may have yet occasion to note, —than when he was master of the Lion d'Or.

Pierre had become accustomed to see his wife among the scum of the revolutionary multitudes in the streets and around the guillotine, but had long since ceased to hope that she might be saved. His first impulses had been directed towards a rescue through the Church; but second thoughts and his sister's good advice showed him the inutility of any attempt that he might make, while at the same time any risk of exposing his own identity would assuredly mean his death. He had accustomed himself, therefore, to regard his wife as of the past. This woman whom they called Angélique was some other being, a travesty, a freak, nothing that belonged to him or his. It was hard to get into this frame of mind, but he achieved it; and he found his best protection in a tricolour cockade and his disfigured face.

As they stood awaiting their turn, in the presence of the reeking knife, it might have been a passing, but sweet, sensation of comfort if Joseph and his master could have caught the sympathetic eye of Pierre Grappin, who stood quite near them, the tears rolling down his scarred cheeks.

"Permit my friend Joseph to go first," pleaded the duke, as Sanson laid his hand upon his shoulder. "Take my snuff-box, monsieur, as a souvenir of this last concession; it is in my waistcoat; they were good enough to leave it."

"I want none of your snuff-box," said Sanson. "Is this your friend?"

Joseph, with a bow, passed on, the two men looking into each other's eyes as the servant went forward.

"You are the best of us, Joseph," said the duke; "say a good word for me in that other land."

He had barely finished the sentence, as it seemed to him, gazing into the world beyond with a penitent and faithful hope, when Joseph's devoted head rolled into Sanson's basket, and the duke was assisted up the steps, amidst cries of "A mort les aristocrates!" "Mort aux tyrans!" "Vive la République!"

The fine old man, bound as he was, came down from heaven to earth for a moment, and faced the yelling crowd with defiant eyes and scornful lips.

"Let him speak!" shouted a hundred voices. "Let him cry for mercy!"

There was a sudden lull.

"Man cries for mercy to God," said the duke, "not to fiends. Vive la France!"

The next moment the duke was the happiest man of all that writhing crowd; he was dead.

CHAPTER XLVII.

DE FOURNIER MEETS AN UNEXPECTED ALLY AT THE BLACK EAGLE.

PIERRE GRAPPIN had a humble lodging at the Black Eagle, and helped the master of the ancient tavern in his business. He had seen de Fournier come in, and had recognised him, in spite of his rags and the blood and mud upon his garments.

It was natural, therefore, that de Fournier should find Pierre at hand when he woke, late in the afternoon and in pain. Happily, his wounds were of no particular account. Pierre had asked permission to wait upon the new-comer.

"Are you much hurt?" he said, as de Fournier turned over and groaned.

"Not so much as you have been, my friend," said de Fournier, staring at Pierre's terrible face.

"You don't know me?"

"No; yet your voice seems familiar."

"It was once; my face also."

"God!" exclaimed de Fournier, dragging himself into a sitting posture. "It cannot be Pierre!"

"Yes, it can," said Pierre; "and it is."

"My dear fellow!" said de Fournier.

"They gave me a mask, you see, those damned gendarmes on horseback."

"Dear old Pierre, we will give them masks that don't speak yet."

"You are sanguine," said Pierre. "There is only one way now."

"What is that?"

"The way out of Paris."

"What, emigration?"

"No, retreat."

"Desert Paris!"

"No, fly from hell," said Pierre.

"Yet you are here?"

"I am alone; my sister, thank God, is in England. I shall join her, when you and yours are safe."

"And you are thinking of that?"

"Yes; to wait over yonder for better times."

"I would rather die fighting," said de Fournier.

"What is the good of fighting? You might as well fire small shot at a thunderbolt. Fight for one thing, Monsieur de Fournier—to get away, and come back with the white flags that are gathering for victory."

"Ah, Pierre, I don't care to join the foreign enemies of France; I would rather hide my head until the storm is over than ride side by side with the Austrian. Meanwhile, however, good Pierre, I am lame, I think; and I know I am hungry."

The dark old chamber was soon steaming like a hospital ward with hot water and lotion, its solitary table loaded with lint and plaster, and by and by redolent of coffee, and, later, of tobacco. Pierre washed his former patron and friend, washed and patched him, and dressed his hair and trimmed his beard, and gave him his breakfast and lighted his pipe, and made him a man again, with, for the time being, it must be admitted, a good deal of limp in his right leg, which was both cut and badly bruised. He said nothing of what he had seen that morning in the Place de la Grêve, but devoted his time to advising de Fournier to get out of France. Laroche would never leave him so long as he remained in Paris. He could not hope to defeat Grébauval and Laroche.

Pierre knew all about the duchess and her daughter being at the Hôtel de Fournier; but it was news to him that de Fournier had married Mathilde. He found intense satisfaction in listening to de Fournier's account of the flight to St. Germain, and the marriage and the sojourn at the Hermitage; but he gnashed his teeth when the story ended in the capture at Honfleur.

"You see, monsieur, it is impossible to contend against Laroche and Grébauval. You were willing to take ship for England then, why not now?"

"There was less excuse then, perhaps, than there is

now, I dare say," replied de Fournier; "but one can only drift with the tide."

"I have known the time when you preferred to swim against it," said Pierre. "If madame la duchesse, or Citoyenne Louvet, as they call her, desired, I believe she could get a passport; and it might be possible for you and madame la comtesse to travel as her servants: disguise is common enough. I know many a man and woman in Paris at this moment who are living as other people; am I not one myself? And you, monsieur, are no longer in the proper clothing of a noble!"

"True, my poor friend. But your disguise makes one's heart bleed. I would like to have had the carving of the man who did it!"

"Nay," said Pierre, with a grin, "I did his business at the time, and pretty completely, I can tell you."

"And what became of those poor devils of Swiss, Pierre?"

"There was one who fell, you will remember, the other two are among the masqueraders of Paris, I think—porters, warders, barbers, shoemakers, or something."

"What a life it is!" said de Fournier.

"Life!" exclaimed Pierre. "It's a dance of death; and, mind you, the Black Eagle is no longer the safe place it was. Spies and police agents are drawing their nets over every pool and through every dip in the most private streams. You will be wise in getting out of this."

"I have thought of that, Pierre."

"Where will you go?"

"To my wife, Pierre."

"To your wife!"

"Yes; I know a few secrets of the Hôtel de Fournier."

Half an hour later de Fournier sallied forth. He had better have waited until it was dark; unless, perchance, Fate had ordained it otherwise. In the street, outside the yard of the Black Eagle, he met, almost face to face, a company of gendarmes, accompanied by Laroche and followed by a number of curious

spectators. The officers had been investigating the locality. De Fournier had left several loungers in the Black Eagle yard, three of them members of the White Buttons, others strangers to him, one of them talking earnestly to Pierre, who, as were several of the others, was armed. Pierre was leaning on a formidable pike. De Fournier, as he went out, wondered whether this was a pretence of Republican fervour or a real defence against it.

Laroche fixed his keen eyes upon de Fournier almost the moment he appeared outside the Black Eagle gateway. De Fournier also saw Laroche. Both drew their swords simultaneously, but as Laroche advanced with his guard de Fournier wisely retreated. He dashed into the yard at a run. In an instant he had the loungers at his back. Before a word could be spoken, the two forces were at each others' throats. The gendarmes had no time to prime their muskets. They came on with the bayonet. In less than no time a dozen of them were *hors de combat.*

"Up the stairway to the roof," said Pierre, backing, with de Fournier, to a dark open doorway. "To the roof. There are timbers across the street. Make for the Luxembourg."

De Fournier slipped into the passage, and began to ascend.

"After him!" commanded Laroche, leading the way, but pulled up sharply by Pierre.

There was only room for one inside the passage. Only one or two could combat for the entrance. The first man fell back with a thrust of Pierre's pike; and Laroche found himself in the breach.

"Give way, in the name of the law!" he said, pointing his sword at Pierre's breast.

"Give way, in the name of hell!" yelled Pierre, with an ugly thrust at Laroche. "You bloody-minded ruffian!"

Laroche staggered, but came up again with the boldness of a wounded lion. Pierre fell upon him with a roar, as a tiger might, and literally pinned him to the earth. Drawing his pike-head from the prostrate body,

he jumped upon it, and stabbed it again. Then he flourished his pike and growled, and looked so much like the devil himself that the combatants fell back and were silent, as if by mutual consent, in presence of this weird overwhelming spectacle. Pierre's face literally grinned; it was hideous. No one seemed inclined to approach him, either to contend against him or to rescue Laroche, who gasped his last while they stood still, fascinated by his grim assailant.

Then some one shouted, "Fire upon him from the street!" and such of the gendarmes as could move dashed into the street, to take their chance of a pot-shot at de Fournier as he climbed forth upon the roof.

Pierre turned Laroche over with his pike, as if the Government agent had been carrion, and spat upon him.

"Messieurs," he said, turning to the lookers-on, the living and the dying, "God is good!"

With which remark he shouldered his pike, and disappeared within the dark entry.

De Fournier had made his way to a narrow door on the upper storey. Here was a short ladder. He mounted it, and came out upon a wide parapet or gutter-way, walked along it a short distance, and reconnoitred. He could hear voices in the street below. They were evidently the voices of his pursuers. He climbed a slanting roof, between two chimneys. On the other side he saw a narrow street, the houses in which, here and there, appeared to be propped with supporting timbers. It was an old-fashioned street. It had balconies and verandahs and wooden shutters; and here and there a house with a court-yard, and here and there a tradesman's sign. He selected as a desirable point of escape a baulk of timber that was stretched between a house a few yards further up the street and one of a better class of buildings with a large balcony in front of it. If he could swing across the timber he might drop into the balcony, and so to the street, or, barring that, even find his way through the house, if it were as empty as it appeared to be.

He made his way along the roofs, until he came to

the plank or baulk of timber. He climbed down to it, and looked into the street. Not a sound broke upon the general stillness. He launched himself forth upon the planking, feet downwards, making his way hand over hand; but he had hardly made his first movement towards the other end of the street when there dashed into it the men who had left the Black Eagle yard to take their chance of shooting the fugitive from the street.

A dozen pairs of eyes saw him at once. A dozen voices cried, "Shoot him!" And as de Fournier swung himself over the spot where he had intended to make for the balcony below, several musket-shots awoke the dull echoes of the place, and de Fournier dropped into the balcony and disappeared from view.

At the same moment there appeared, at the edge of the parapet from which de Fournier had climbed, the figure of Pierre, heroic against the fading light of the afternoon. He stood upright, as if he had been on the saftest ground, his pike in his left hand, his right hand, with clinched fist, threatening the crowd.

"Cowards!" he shouted, in his big clear voice. "Scum!"

Then, as suddenly as he had appeared, Pierre was gone.

"After him!" shouted the men in the street, as Laroche had shouted when de Fournier made his escape into the Black Eagle yard.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

IN THE LION'S DEN.

It was a spacious balcony. At some time or other fair ladies might have sat there to see gallant processions pass along the narrow street below.

De Fournier staggered as he landed. The bullets of

two of his assailants had shot away his hat. Otherwise he was untouched. He ran his hands over his body inquiringly. The scramble across the street hand over hand had strained his muscles; but there was no blood upon his clothes. He had the use of all his limbs. Unfortunately, he had dropped his sword. He had a powerful knife in his belt, which Pierre had given him. He drew it, and looked around him. First he glanced at the distance to the ground. This was too great for a drop with anything like safety. Nor were there any means of climbing down.

He peered into the room that gave upon the balcony. It was a large, square apartment. The window was open. He wondered if it would be wise to enter. There was a broad old oak seat beneath the window. He might do worse than try his fortune here. While he was hesitating, shouts came up from the street below. They must be his pursuers, he thought. This decided him. He leaped lightly upon the old oak seat, and thence to the floor.

A large, wainscoted room. No door-ways apparent. They were, no doubt, either for secrecy or artistic effect, part of the wainscoting. Two large maps covered a part of the walls, one of France, the other of Europe. A hat and cloak hung upon a peg close by. At one end of the room were seats, a massive table, with papers scattered about, and a tall arm-chair; at the other a rail was fixed, with side-bars, as if for witnesses or prisoners. The whole place had a magisterial appearance.

"A judge's room?" said de Fournier, as if asking himself a question. "Or a commissary of police? I had better get out of this."

He looked about for a door, but could find none. Then he went to the table, and examined the papers.

"Grébauval's room!" he exclaimed. "I'm lost!" at the same time drawing his knife from its leathern case and buttoning his coat across his chest.

Almost at the same moment a door opened and closed with a catch. He turned round. It was Grébauval who had entered the room.

"Grébauval!" exclaimed de Fournier.

"De Fournier!" responded Grébauval. "And it is you whom the patriot citizens are hunting?"

As he spoke, the cries in the street came loud and noisily in at the open window.

"I have that honour," said de Fournier. "They are your comrades."

"They are looking for your body; but some of our patriot soldiers have not learnt to shoot as well as they will with a little more practice," replied Grébauval.

"It is a pity you do not train them upon the enemies of France," said de Fournier, not thinking much about what he was saying, but watching every movement of his enemy, who drew his sword.

"I must come to their assistance," said Grébauval.

The sounds in the street stopped.

"They are coming round by the stairway," said Grébauval.

De Fournier began to edge for the window.

"No, citizen, not that way. Your hour has come. I am going to kill you. Better die on my sword than be torn to pieces by the mob."

Grébauval was livid. He looked devilish.

"Give me a sword," said de Fournier. "Don't add my murder to your other crimes."

"What is the good of a sword to you?" sneered Grébauval, intercepting de Fournier's movement towards the window, and approaching him with a tigerish look in his eyes. "Don't you remember when we once before crossed swords?—a combat of your own seeking, an assassination it might have been, for you did not know that a civilian was also master of the gentleman's weapon."

De Fournier remembered it only too well.

"If my father was your father, as they say, you showed signs of his gallant blood for once, and that was when you gave me back my sword."

"Curse you and your father!" exclaimed Grébauval. "It is God's righteous judgment upon you both that I kill you." And he advanced slowly upon de Fournier,

without raising his feet from the floor, gliding towards him, gripping his sword, but with a hand trembling with suppressed passion.

"Since you are the better swordsman," said de Fournier, not willing to die ignominiously, "and claim to be a gentleman, at least give yourself the satisfaction of killing me honourably: make it a duel to the death, but give me a sword."

While de Fournier was speaking, Grébauval was peculiarly conscious of his opponent's eyes, which were fixed, not upon his, but upon his mouth, for it is there the fighting man looks for the forecasted action of his enemy.

"I have lived for this day," said Grébauval, "have prayed for it at the grave of my mother, prayed to heaven and to hell, have given my soul for it. Damn you! You effigy of nobility!" Grébauval hissed the words between his teeth, his eyes blazing with a fury which he endeavoured to control.

Then, suddenly catching at the exposed breast of de Fournier, who had hitherto kept his right arm in something of a position of defence which might mean a possible seizure of Grébauval's sword-arm, he lunged with tremendous force upon his opponent.

Quick as lightning, and with the keen-sightedness of a man who has come through many terrible chances by courage and audacity, de Fournier crouched as Grébauval flung himself forward, and caught his assailant by his sword-wrist, caught him, happily, with his right hand, and after a short struggle twisted Grébauval's arm almost out of its socket. His sword fell with a clatter upon the floor.

Above the noise of the struggle came the shouts of a mob on the stairs. De Fournier, letting his assailant fall, took his knife in his right hand. Grébauval reached out his left hand for his sword, and with an herculean effort got upon his feet. De Fournier, without a word, seized him by the throat, and stabbed him to death, flinging him to the ground with a thud that shook the room.

De Fournier was moved by no feeling of revenge.

Self-preservation was his impulse. The shouts of the mob passed by the door and went further along the corridors. He thrust his knife into its sheath, and was already upon the window-seat, intending to risk a leap into the street, when the door through which Grébauval had entered swung open once more, and clicked back with a sound like the snap of a pistol. His hand upon his knife, de Fournier turned, to meet the anxious gaze of Jaffray Ellicott.

"My God! it's you!" exclaimed the young fellow.

"Jaffray!" said de Fournier, coming down from the seat.

"You've killed him!"

"To save my own life."

"I know."

"Will you help me?"

"To the death!" Jaffray replied.

"Quick, then," said the count: "strip him."

De Fournier at once began to untie the tricolour sash and unbutton the deputy's coat.

"You will personate him?" said Jaffray. "It is an inspiration! Fortune is with you. Here are his hat and cloak."

Jaffray took down from their peg on the wall the deputy's grey cloak and three-cornered hat with its familiar cockade, and flung them to the count.

Already de Fournier was half undressed. It was an easy matter for him, he had been so torn about and made buttonless.

To get into the dead man's vest and coat and sash was the work of a few minutes; to change pantaloons was a more difficult task.

"The change must be complete," said de Fournier, breathless with excitement; "and the beasts are coming back."

"I will stop them," said Jaffray, rushing to the other side of the room and disappearing by the door through which, a day or two previously, Grébauval had conducted Laroche.

As he dragged the body free from its nankeen breeches, de Fournier heard Jaffray directing the

crowd to proceed in another direction, and the mob passed by the door.

It was a daring piece of strategy. Jaffray was back again in a few minutes. The ways of the Grébauval hôtel and bureau were, fortunately, complicated.

"And now to dress him," said de Fournier, pulling the dead man into a sitting attitude.

At last the ghastly work was done. A mob in the street could be heard planting a ladder against the balcony, the top rung of it near the window. The pursuers did not know whose balcony they were about to scale.

"Sit at the desk," said Jaffray; "this is his chair. Let them enter. They know how bitterly cool Grébauval could be on occasion. Let them think they shot him. Tap three times on this panel, and I will come to you. Laroche may come by way of the Palais de Justice, and he would be familiar with this habit of the deputy. I hear footsteps on the outer stair. Now, my friend, to prove that you are a good actor."

Jaffray left the room. De Fournier, as Grébauval, took up a pen and bent over some papers on the desk. His hand trembled, and his heart beat wildly. It was with difficulty that he could sit still as the noises of the approaching crowd increased and the three-cornered hat of a National Guard appeared above the last rung of the ladder.

CHAPTER XLIX.

JACQUES AND DE FOURNIER.

THE dead body of Grébauval lay near the window. Above it, from the balcony, suddenly appeared the face of Jacques Renaud. De Fournier laid down his pen and looked up at him. Jacques turned to speak with some one in the street.

"Ascend, comrades!" he shouted.

At the same moment the other section of the mob thundered at the door. Jacques leaped down into the room. His place was taken by another and another in the balcony.

Jacques stepped over the body, and saluted de Fournier, who rose from his seat and tapped three times at the wainscot behind him. Jaffray Ellicott entered almost immediately.

"Open to our friends," said de Fournier.

Jaffray obeyed. A dozen panting patriots rushed in. Recruits still continued to advance by way of the window.

Raising his hand for silence, de Fournier in the well-mimicked voice of Grébauval said, "Which of you, my brave citizens, had the honour of firing the shot that brought down the traitor de Fournier?"

"It was I," shouted the ruffian whose acquaintance we made originally at the Lion d'Or,—"I, Jacques Renaud, corporal of the National Guard."

"Give me your hand, brother," said de Fournier, taking his grimy paw. "If I have any influence with the commander-in-chief, by this time to-morrow you shall be a lieutenant."

"Vive Grébauval!" shouted a dozen voices.

"But who says you shot the traitor?" demanded another valiant soldier, stepping to the front. "I was one of the firing party."

"Yes, it is true," said several of his comrades.

"I, too, fired my fusil," said another.

"It was I who brought him down," said Renaud, spurning the body with his foot, "I, and no other."

"Yes, it was Corporal Jacques," shouted his supporters. "Vive Renaud!"

"You shall have your rewards, comrades; not one only, but all of you. Citizen Secretary, take their names."

Half a dozen men crowded around Jaffray, who took his seat and made his record.

"In the mean time, messieurs," said de Fournier, "pass into the next room, and you shall see that the Republic knows how to pay for good services."

"Vive Grébauval! Vive la République!" they shouted

"Et à mort les aristocrates!" growled a raucous voice, seizing the dead body by the hair and hacking off the head, without warning or time for protest, if de Fournier had been inclined to interpose.

A yell resounded through the place and fluttered the maps on the walls, as the patriot held the reeking trophy up and spat upon it.

"This way, messieurs," said Jaffray, opening the door that led into his own office.

"But first the money, Citizen Grébauval, if you please," he said. "Permit me." And, opening a cabinet behind Grébauval's chair, he brought out a small bag of gold and a bundle of assignats.

"Vive le citoyen secrétaire!" shouted the men, who remained to look on.

The room was almost immediately cleared. De Fournier, breathing hard, sat down, and watched the blood of his enemy flow in a serpent-like trail across the floor. He had seen death in many forms, had dragged himself through many a red encounter, but never before had he experienced so sickening a feeling of nausea.

Advancing against the enemy after the affair at Cherry Valley, he had fainted from the effects of a sharp wound. He remembered the sensation at this moment, and clutched at the table in front of him for support. He heard the sound of many voices from Jaffray's room, and made a great effort not to fall back helplessly. Presently the desperate crew of aristocrat hunters returned, with varied cries of "Vive la République!" "Vive Grébauval!" "A mort les aristocrates!" He recovered sufficiently to sit upright, and that was all. His eyes followed the patriots, headed by Jacques, as they made a fresh assault upon the body of his enemy.

"Fling him into the street!" they shouted; and at once they proceeded to hoist the body into the balcony.

The ruffian with the reeking trophy—a sight common enough in those days—mounted first. Lifting the head

by its hair, and holding it at arm's length, he cried, "Citizens, make way for the remainder!"

A hoarse cry, that might have been the laughter of fiends, responded.

"Room, citizen, for the *ci-devant* Count de Fournier!"

Another burst of devilish joy.

Jacques and the rest lifted the body upon the railing of the balcony.

De Fournier looked on, confused still in mind, but recovering under the touch of Jaffray, who stood by his side, quiet as his chief, but alert, quick of resource.

"Down with him!" said Renaud's assistants; and down went the remains of Grébauval, amidst a roar of frightful jubilations. Then, one by one, the men in the balcony disappeared, the others rushing out of the room by the doorway, too intent upon their ghastly business to take formal leave.

Jaffray followed them, and pushed the door to with a click; then, avoiding the ghastly evidence of the tragedy that stained the floor and bedabbled the rugs, he mounted into the balcony. De Fournier watched him, without uttering a word.

"It is awful!" said Jaffray. "They are tearing him limb from limb."

The young fellow was very pale, but his lips were tightened into a mere thin line.

"Come this way, monsieur," he said. "You must wash and dress."

De Fournier roused himself.

"You are a brave fellow," he said, staggering to his feet.

"Come to your room: a bottle of wine and a bath, and you will be Grébauval indeed. First, I will give instructions that you are not to be disturbed on any account."

He went into his office for a moment, returned, the panel clicking after him, then closed and fastened the window, and led the way to the secret bureau where Grébauval had entertained Laroche.

Here Jaffray produced a bottle of red wine, and filled a goblet, which he handed to his chief.

"Nay, fill for yourself also," said de Fournier.

Jaffray obeyed.

"You have saved my life, Jaffray. God bless you!" said de Fournier, emptying the goblet at a draught.

"You once did me a similar favour, but without my help," Jaffray replied.

"Let us give thanks to the Blessed Virgin," exclaimed de Fournier, "who has answered the prayer of my wife and Marie Bruyset, for by the Blessed Mother of God's intervention a miracle has been performed,—a miracle, Jaffray."

"You are overcome," said Jaffray. "I could not have believed you could be so much moved."

"Nor I, Jaffray; nor I," said de Fournier. "I could weep. It seemed as if a spirit-hand defended me, as if an avenging angel turned Grébauval's sword aside and struck him down."

"Yes, no doubt," said Jaffray, in as commonplace a manner as he could command, realising the necessity of a truce to sentiment and reminiscence.

The more de Fournier seemed inclined to rest and reflect, the more matter-of-fact Jaffray became.

"Now, monsieur, you are better. Remember, this is only a skirmish; the battle has still to be fought and won."

De Fournier stood up, stretched out his arms, shook himself, and tightened Grébauval's sash about his waist.

"True, my friend, true. Lead on: you are my good captain; I shall be fit for action with your next word of command."

"This way, then," said Jaffray, "this way, Citizen Grébauval."

CHAPTER L.

A DESPERATE GAME.

BEFORE Jaffray summoned Grébauval's man to his duties, de Fournier had bathed, and dressed himself with the characteristic care of Grébauval, had made a tour of his rooms, and had practised the Grébauval manner before a glass, with a running criticism from Jaffray, who offered now and then a suggestion, and generally stage-managed (as one may say) the various scenes of the moment and the prospective scenes to come.

By this time it was nearly morning. The grim tokens of the fight had been cleared away. The servants, instructed by Jaffray, now made their appearance, having kept studiously out of the way as long as there was any apparent danger. Grébauval's valet-de-chambre had stayed out late at his club, and only returned in time to assist in the service of an early breakfast, to which de Fournier and Jaffray did ample justice.

"And now," said Jaffray, "master of your hôtel and duly installed as magistrate and secret adviser of the Committee, let us consider the situation."

"Proceed," said de Fournier.

"I have bad news for you. If it was an angel who helped you, there was none to stand by the duke and poor Monsieur Joseph, except to guide them, perhaps, to Heaven."

"What do you mean, Jaffray?" de Fournier asked.

"They joined the band of martyrs yesterday."

"Dead!" exclaimed de Fournier.

"Alas, yes," said Jaffray. "If men can die gloriously without swords in their hands, they passed away triumphantly. France will one day feel proud of the aristocrats who are daily bending their heads to the guillotine."

"Poor de Louvet! Poor Joseph!" said de Fournier.

"They are past praying for," said Jaffray. "We have other prisoners now to consider. The last thing you did—you the Deputy Grébauval—don't forget for a single moment that you are the deputy—the last thing you did before you killed de Fournier, or before he fell to the musket of the brave Jacques Renaud, was to order the arrest of the duchess, Marie Bruyset, and your wife."

"Indeed!" said de Fournier. "And where are they?"

"Close by, in the Conciergerie."

"Why did I do that?"

"You had your own good reasons. You want to marry the countess, and everything conspires to give you success. You have accepted the proposals of the Committee to go to La Vendée as their delegate to the Army. You have arranged to start immediately,—to-day, perhaps. It is your intention to take the countess with you. The duke dead, you expect that the duchess, threatened with the same fate, will make a desperate and successful appeal to the countess for her life. If the countess gives way, you will take them with you; if not, you will leave them to their fate.

"Citizen Johannes, your serving-man, tells me that in the encounter at the Black Eagle last night, Laroche was killed by a villain, who, from the description, I gather to be Pierre Grappin. Laroche being silenced is a useful ally; he was the only man I feared; and, under ordinary circumstances, he would have been one of your first callers this morning."

"It is now six o'clock; we have still two good hours for office work. Seeing that you are on the eve of your departure, it may be that Citizen Robespierre or Citizen Danton may call to say *au revoir;* that depends upon what arrangements you made with them at your meeting yesterday. From something you said, I should not be surprised that you boasted of having for companion in your journey the pretty young widow de Fournier. But we shall see."

De Fournier took in every word Jaffray said, and every suggestion, with a clear head and a determina-

tion to play the rôle of Grébauval with all the dexterity he could command.

"What about our prisoners?" he said, as soon as Jaffray gave him an opportunity to speak.

"It all falls out most naturally," said the young fellow, cool as a practised diplomatist, and with the genius of a successful man of affairs. "It is as easy as lying, and without the necessity of much invention. You have the right to interrogate your prisoners; you as good as hold in your hands the power of life and death; you can write passports; you have them in blank, signed by the Committee; you have almost unlimited money; are you not the famous Deputy Grébauval?"

"Can you be the little helpless chap I snatched from the mêlée at Cherry Valley and tucked away on my saddle-bow?"

"The same little chap," said Jaffray, with a smile. "But at present the private secretary of the Deputy Grébauval, whom I now humbly invite to return to his official bureau."

"Lead on, dear friend," said de Fournier.

"Not in that voice," said Jaffray.

"Jaffray, I am at your service," said de Fournier, in the deeper tones of Grébauval, and with a slight trick of deliberation that was in strong contrast with de Fournier's natural and impulsive manner.

Passing through several rooms and across passageways, Jaffray opened the door of the deputy's chief bureau, the court of the interrogating judge, where Grébauval, unchecked, had frequently taken upon himself the highest powers of the judicial function. Moreover, it was here that the lists of the proscribed were made up; it was here that the findings of the juries in the court of the Revolutionary Tribunal had been decided by anticipation; and it was to this room that Robespierre, Danton, and Grébauval had retired after their encouraging addresses to the assassins of the 10th of August.

"I have some papers for you," said Jaffray, when de Fournier had seated himself in Grébauval's chair.

Jaffray went into his own room, and returned with a packet of manuscripts and letters.

He found de Fournier with his eyes fixed upon the spot where the body of Grébauval had lain.

"You are thinking of last night," said Jaffray.

"It seems years ago," said de Fournier. "Supposing he had killed me?"

"Supposing he had? Why, of course he did! You are Monsieur le juge Grébauval, better known as the Deputy Grébauval; and, for God's sake, don't forget that, monsieur, for a single moment," said Jaffray, laying down several packets of papers. "These are letters to the commander-in-chief of the forces in La Vendée; these, your instructions; these, fastened with a tricolour band, are letters to certain officers in Brittany, and other documents connected with your embassy. You keep important papers, that you may require when you are away from here, in the breast-pocket of your coat."

De Fournier ran his eyes over the papers, and thrust them into his pocket.

"The passports?" he said. "We may need them for our companions."

Jaffray drew from a drawer, close by Grébauval's seat, a small portfolio.

"Shall I fill them up?"

"Yes; for the Citoyennes Louvet, Fournier, and Bruyset; and for Citizen Ellicott, secretary to the deputy; and for the Deputy Grébauval, delegate of the Committee of Public Safety; and also for the Citizen Maurice, his servant. That is for Pierre Grappin, if we can find him. Another set of passports for the same persons, to quit France, from Havre or any other port; and a passport for the delegate Grébauval, on a mission to the Fleet, which you shall attach to a document similar in purport to Grébauval's appointment to the Army."

Jaffray made a rapid note of these instructions.

"You are about to say that Havre is nowhere near La Vendée. I don't propose to go to La Vendée. So soon as we are ready, you will ride with all speed to

Havre and secure a vessel for England. You will be well accredited to the mayor, and to any other officer, on a secret mission. Your chief, the Deputy Grébauval, with his wife and her mother, and his wife's maid, are following, the deputy with a double mission, to the Army and the Fleet: that is, if any explanation is required. But say as little as possible."

"I understand," said Jaffray.

"We shall need money," said de Fournier.

"Your private keys, if you please," said Jaffray; "they are in the aperture below the drawer, on your left."

De Fournier opened the drawer.

"Pull it right out, if you please."

De Fournier pulled it out.

"In the corner, on the left hand, there is a hole. Put in your hand."

De Fournier brought forth a small bunch of keys.

"In the secret bureau, where we toasted each other, there is a cabinet. When it is opened I will show you a spring that unlocks a second one concealed beneath the floor. You had to be careful in hiding your money. For the moment you do not want it."

"But it is not ours!" said de Fournier, in his natural voice.

"Monsieur!" exclaimed Jaffray.

"Pardon, Jaffray," said de Fournier.

"You are the delegate of the Committee of Public Safety. Permit me, monsieur: I will hold the keys—that is, if you do not object."

"By all means," said de Fournier, giving up the bunch, which, having regard to at least a couple of the lock-openers, was of a very decorative character, one of the keys being jewelled, and another of curious shape, long in the handle, and with a quaint movable ring at the end of it.

"You will have a coach and horses and postillions ready at the Hôtel de Fournier at dusk," said de Fournier; "and, if possible, let them be strangers to Grébauval. We will start to-night. You shall call upon Citizen Robespierre and explain to him that I had

not counted upon the ruse of an arrest in vain: the widow of the *ci-devant* de Fournier has consented to my wishes. By Heaven, Jaffray, it galls me to go so far as this!"

"Nonsense, monsieur; it is nothing. If I am your ambassador to the Citizen Robespierre, I will blacken her and the Citoyenne Louvet too, and I will not spare even Marie Bruyset, if need be. But I think you will have to do all this yourself. The Citizen Robespierre will call upon you. The death of Laroche will be an inconvenience to him. He will ask you to name his successor. Name Sinette, who is just now at Lyons, and who cannot be back in Paris for a week. Meanwhile, Laroche's assistant, Dumorier, will serve; he is a mild, shifty, timid creature, and can do no harm; Laroche did not permit him to be more than ornamental."

De Fournier wrote down the name of Sinette and Lyons, by way of memoranda, to which he added de Fournier and Mathilde.

"Apart from the loss of Laroche, he might call to congratulate you on the veritable death of de Fournier."

"I am prepared for every emergency," said de Fournier, tapping the handle of the knife which was hidden in his sash. "In the event of discovery, I will kill him."

"There is no chance of discovery, monsieur, if you play your part as you can play it," said Jaffray.

"I am not sure that, after all, one does not owe it to France to rid her of the monster, whatever happens," said de Fournier, not noticing Jaffray's remark.

"And leave your wife to perish miserably?" said Jaffray.

"Have no fear, my friend," said de Fournier. "I am going to play the rôle of the selfish lover; I am going to desert France in her need; I am going to——"

"Retreat, and reorganise your forces for fresh operations," said Jaffray. "I need not tell you, a soldier, that next to victory is a masterly retreat."

"And when shall we interrogate our prisoners, Jaffray?" said de Fournier.

"My view is that you shall defer that until later in the day. I am not sure that it might not be well to release at least one of them, so that she might prepare for her journey. I shall have to ask her consent."

"Another selfish lover, eh?" said de Fournier. "No; we will have them here, and they shall go hence to the Hôtel de Fournier; and you shall rejoice Robespierre's damnable soul with an account of Grébauval's victory."

While they were speaking, Jaffray was summoned by the janitor, who guarded the outer chamber leading to Jaffray's room.

Absent for a few minutes, Jaffray returned, announcing "Monsieur the Citizen Robespierre."

CHAPTER LI.

"FORTUNE FAVOURS THE BRAVE."

"BONJOUR, citizen deputy," said Robespierre.

"Bonjour, monsieur," responded de Fournier.

"Monsieur!" remarked Robespierre, repeating the unusual salutation, for Jaffray had forgotten to tell de Fournier that Grébauval usually addressed Robespierre as "Citizen," or "Citizen friend Robespierre," occasionally as "Good comrade," but never as "Monsieur."

"I have been in fashionable society since we met," said de Fournier, quick to detect his mistake. "The *ci-devant* comtesse is not so democratic as her Republican mother."

"Oh, the Citoyenne Fournier," said Robespierre, smiling. "Well?"

"I am trying a little coercion; and with good effect, I believe," said de Fournier, in Grébauval's most sarcastic manner.

"She does not like the Conciergerie?"

"You have already heard of her arrest?"

"I hear everything," said Robespierre. "Marat says he does, but I do."

"And with so many greater matters on your mind?"

"Little things are steps in the greater ladder," said Robespierre.

De Fournier bowed and turned his chair a little, so that he had his back to the light, and Robespierre sat nearly facing the window.

"And the Citoyenne Fournier?"

"I propose shortly to interrogate her, and the rest."

"The rest?"

"Her mother and Citoyenne Bruyset."

"The daughter of Laroche? killed last night in his courageous effort to take the Royalist Fournier."

"Who was slain here, at this window," said de Fournier.

"So I understand. Dumorier, Laroche's assistant, brought me a full report. Climbing across the street, he was shot, and, dropping into your balcony, fell dead. Fate is kind to you, Grébauval. You did well to reward them, and promise promotion to the Corporal Citizen Renaud."

"I am glad that you approve,"

"You have always won my approval," said Robespierre. "I shall miss you. For your own sake, you leave Paris at a fortunate time. Both Danton and Marat are your enemies."

"I had feared it."

"I fear them not," said Robespierre. "They are my enemies, too; but I hold them in my hand, as I hold France,"

He rose, as he spoke, and offered his snuff-box to de Fournier, who bowed stiffly and took a pinch, observing, at the same time, that it was fortunate for France that she had so great a friend and so powerful a master.

"No further news from England?" asked Robespierre, turning the coversation into a new channel.

"None," said de Fournier.

"You leave behind your clerk, Ellicott?"

"He accompanies me on the first stages of my journey, but will return."

"That is well. I shall take the liberty of occupying your seat now and then, in your absence. The Citizen

Deputy Grébauval can have no successor. I and young Ellicott will try our hands in keeping your place warm until you come back: what do you say?"

"That you are most considerate, as you always are."

"I am not supposed to have the gift of friendship, Grébauval."

"I have proved it to the contrary, Citizen Robespierre, and would desire to thank you for many acts of true and courageous comradeship."

"When two men have compared notes in their love-affairs, they have given hostages to sentiment; I think I must put Mademoiselle the Duke d'Orléans' daughter under arrest, eh?"

"If with such success as is likely to attend my adventure, I would that you might," said de Fournier.

"And when do you propose to leave Paris?"

"I purpose sending back the Citoyenne Louvet, her daughter, and the little maid, Bruyset, to the Hôtel de Fournier, whence, as you know, I had them last night taken to the Conciergerie; and, the pretty widow consenting, I intend to leave before dusk, and thus begin our honeymoon, with or without the ceremony of marriage, civil or otherwise."

"You have been a patient wooer," said Robespierre.

"Until now," said de Fournier. "Last night she scorned me; this morning she has sent me a repentant message."

"You went to her in too bacchanalian a spirit last night; I said as much to Danton; Marat said you were a weak fool, and too much of an aristocrat."

"I never worked for his good opinion," de Fournier replied, with an angry growl that was peculiarly characteristic of Grébauval.

"Good-bye, Grébauval," said Robespierre, offering his hand. "I shall miss you; I have often profited by your wise advice; the patriots have found your money useful, I thank you for the patriots."

"Good-bye, my friend," said de Fournier. "The memory of your friendship will help me."

Robespierre's thin hand made but a slight response to de Fournier's grip.

"May I beg a favour," said de Fournier, "the exchange, not of snuff only, but an exchange of boxes? I will keep yours as a souvenir of your nobility of mind, your statesmanship, and the honour of your friendship."

"With pleasure, citizen friend," said Robespierre, handing de Fournier a small silver box, with "François Maximilien Robespierre" engraven upon the lid in fanciful ornamental writing.

"Always generous, Grébauval," said Robespierre, examining the jewelled box which de Fournier handed to him from the pocket of Grébauval's embroidered vest. "You give me twenty times the value of my own."

"Your box, citizen, is bejewelled with the fame of its owner."

"By all the classic saints and sinners, the pretty widow of the dead *ci-devant* count has given your tongue the twist of the courtier! But you must let them feel the roughest side of it in La Vendée."

"Trust me, Citizen Robespierre, saviour of France," said de Fournier. "I will prove worthy of my chief."

"Farewell," said Robespierre. "I shall look for early dispatches from the front."

"You shall have them," said de Fournier. "Farewell!" and he stood in the doorway while Jaffray Ellicott bowed out the illustrious Tribune, who condescended to say "Au revoir, Citizen Ellicott," at the same time acknowledging the military salute of the gendarme on duty.

"Thank God, that is over!" exclaimed de Fournier, flinging himself with a great sigh of relief into the deputy's chair.

"I congratulate you," said Jaffray.

"I thank God," said de Fournier; "but what a hypocrite!"

"Who, Robespierre?"

"No; I, de Fournier."

"What an actor, you mean!" said Jaffray.

"I paid him compliments, and shook hands with him," said de Fournier; "and—you will applaud this stroke of diplomacy—look at that."

He handed the young fellow Robespierre's snuff-box. Jaffray read the name upon the lid.

"I gave him Grébauval's—an exchange, in the name of friendship."

De Fournier laughed, for the first time for twenty-four hours—laughed heartily; and Jaffray untightened his lips and shared his mirth.

"And now, Jaffray," said de Fournier, "what is the next item on our programme?"

"A walk through the court, sit for a few moments by the judges, exchange a greeting with Fouquier-Tinville, take a carriage with me to the Hôtel de Fournier, give orders yourself for the preparations you desire, see the woman who is waiting-maid to your wife, tell her that madame has consented to your union—give it her as a secret, and at the same time make her a handsome present. I will take the major-domo of the house into my confidence, pay him well; he will direct the arrangements for your departure; he knows what happened last night; I shall tell him that madame has given way, under the influence of her mother and the threat of *Mademoiselle la Guillotine*, and he will make merry over it!"

"Damn him!" said de Fournier.

"By all means," said Jaffray. "After that, you will return and order up the prisoners for interrogation; and you will——"

"Conduct that part of the business in my own way, Jaffray."

"Certainly," said Jaffray, "if you frighten Madame de Louvet a little; but I hope you will deal gently with Marie."

"Never fear," said de Fournier. "If I am tempted to play the part of Grébauval too long, it will be that the rôle of de Fournier shall appear all the more gracious. But let us not celebrate our victory until it is won. I do not forget Honfleur."

"Nor I the duke and Monsieur Joseph," said Jaffray.

"You rebuke me, Jaffray," said de Fournier. "I had forgotten them both, God forgive me!"

CHAPTER LII.

DRAMATIC MOMENTS.

"TAKE your hands off!" said Marie, as a couple of stalwart gendarmes brought Laroche's indignant daughter into Grébauval's room and thrust her before the bar.

"Termagant!" said one of the men, still holding her by the wrist.

"Stand apart," said de Fournier, addressing the officers, and carefully assuming the severity of the Grébauval manner.

The gendarmes stepped back a few paces.

"You offer both physical and moral resistance to the law," said de Fournier, addressing the prisoner.

"I am glad you don't call your law by the name of justice," Marie replied.

"It is the same thing," said de Fournier.

"Another name for insult and persecution," she replied.

"You will do well to answer respectfully," said de Fournier.

"The Republic would do well to fill its offices with persons entitled to be answered respectfully," said Marie, looking at de Fournier defiantly.

The judge lowered his face and smiled.

Then Marie for the first time saw Jaffray Ellicott, sitting near the judge and taking notes. There were no other officers present except the two gendarmes. Jaffray looked up, and their eyes met.

"What were you doing at the Hôtel de Fournier yesterday?" asked the interrogating magistrate.

"You know well enough."

"Answer the question."

"I was trying to help a lady to bear up against your cruel and brutal persecution."

One of the gendarmes stepped forward as if to restrain her.

"Stand back," said the judge.

"She was a consenting party to what you are pleased to call cruel persecution."

"You know better."

"Do you mean to imply that I do not speak the truth?"

"I leave you to take my reply for what it is worth."

"But, plainly speaking, you mean that I lie?"

"When you say that Madame la Comtesse de Fournier willingly consented to your visit, yes, I say you lie!"

"Remove her," said the judge. "Citizen secretary, let the prisoner be held for the present in my private bureau."

The officers advanced towards the prisoner.

"Messieurs," said the judge, "leave the prisoner; Citizen Ellicott will put her in safe keeping. Where are the others?"

"In the anteroom, citizen judge."

"Bring in the Citoyenne Louvet."

Jaffray disappeared with Marie Bruyset.

The gendarmes returned with the duchess, who entered in a dejected, spiritless way, all her courage gone, her face haggard, her manner distraught.

"Give the prisoner a chair," said de Fournier.

Jaffray, who had just reappeared on the scene, obeyed the order.

"Let the officers retire," said the judge. "I will interrogate the prisoner in private."

The gendarmes disappeared.

"You know the charge against you?" said de Fournier, as Grébauval, and with an extra sternness in his voice.

"Yes," said the prisoner.

"What have you to say to it?"

"Nothing. I am tired of defending myself, and I know it is useless."

"Why do you think it useless?"

"Because you have slain my husband—you, who promised me his life."

She spoke slowly, and her voice trembled; but she had evidently given up all hope, and had resolved to follow her husband into a better world with a dignity, if possible, worthy of the house of de Louvet.

"But what did you promise in return?"

"To aid you in your suit for my most unhappy daughter."

"That you confess?"

"To my shame and my sorrow, I confess it; and, moreover, I confess that in my heart I was a royalist, that I despised the democracy, loathed the sans-culottes, and had no thoughts in common with your leaders, Robespierre, Marat, or Danton."

"If these answers mean anything, they mean that you have no desire to live."

"Monsieur Grébauval," said the poor woman, seeking his eyes with her own that were red with weeping, "I would like to live for my daughter's sake, if we might live in peace; otherwise I would prefer to follow my husband, in the humble hope that I might be deemed worthy to enter into the same holy rest."

"You are a changed woman since last we met."

"I think not. It seems ages since I spoke to you the truth that was in me; but it was only last night."

"You would still give me your daughter for the guarantee of your life?"

"I love my daughter with all my heart and soul; I leave her to God and her own conscience."

"Supposing I gave you a passport and found you the means to leave France, you and your daughter, with no compact whatever between you and Grébauval?"

"Ah, do not mock me!" she answered, wearily. "You have slain the dear duke and the good Joseph; but it was kind of you to let them go together: the duke would be helpless, even in heaven, without Joseph."

A touch of her characteristic volubility began to be manifest in the poor lady's answers, notwithstanding her utter hopelessness.

"I am sorry the duke is no more," said de Fournier,

and there was an unmistakable ring of sympathy in the voice that startled the duchess. She looked around with a vague stare, as if trying to account for something strange, and then she once more tried to catch the judge's eyes, but his head was bent over some documents which he was carefully examining.

"Sorry!" she said. "Sorry! But you could have saved him; you said you would. Miserable time-server, tyrant! Oh, God forgive me! I desire to be calm; I pray to leave the world penitent. Sorry, you say—sorry! You do well to scoff at the grief of a wretched widow, who suffers from the remorseful knowledge that she was not worthy of her dear, dead lord. Sorry! Oh, mon Dieu!"

She leaned against the bar and covered her face with her hands.

"I can't stand this," said de Fournier in a whisper to Jaffray. "I will dismiss her. Take her to Marie; explain our plans to them, lock them in, and leave me to meet my wife alone."

"Madame," he said, addressing the prisoner, "your life is spared. You will go back to the Hôtel de Fournier. Meanwhile, accompany this young citizen, whom you know. He will explain our dispositions in regard to your future."

She raised her head and lifted her eyes towards the judge. The sound of his voice had a softness in it that did not belong to him or the place. She could only think that she was losing her senses.

"This way, madame," said Jaffray, offering his arm, upon which she laid her hand timidly. She expected arm and man to fade into nothingness.

"I don't understand," she murmured. "I am a poor creature."

De Fournier watched the pair as they left the room.

Then he tapped upon the Jaffray panel. A gendarme entered.

"Bring in your prisoner the Citoyenne Mathilde Fournier."

"Yes, citizen judge."

"And treat her gently: she is no criminal."

The officer saluted, and left the room, to return with Mathilde.

"Leave us," said de Fournier. "Leave us, and permit no one to enter under any pretext whatever."

The officer saluted, and the door clicked as he closed it.

"Take a seat, madame," said de Fournier, emphasising the Grébauval manner.

Mathilde laid her hand upon the chair in which her mother had been seated.

"I prefer to stand," she said.

De Fournier felt a choking sensation in his throat. He could hardly forbear crying out, "Mathilde, my dearest, don't you know me?" He longed to tell her the good news at once. But he had threshed out with Jaffray the politic conduct of it this extraordinary meeting. If the joy of it was almost too much for him, what effect might a sudden revelation have upon her, who believed him dead, and found herself following, as she thought, in his dead footsteps, with sad memories of her murdered father, and her mother a prisoner, with herself and her faithful friend Marie Bruyset?

"They say I am like your husband," said de Fournier, in the curt Grébauval manner.

"It has been said," was the calm reply.

"But I have none of his good nature?"

"No."

"And yet I have liberated your mother and Marie Bruyset."

"Why?" asked Mathilde, expecting some new proposition of a degrading character.

"You think my motive must be bad?"

No answer.

"You are prepared for the worst?"

"Yes."

De Fournier, between his love and his desire to lead Mathilde into the blinding sunshine of their reunion, found all his interrogatory plans evaporating.

"But you do not despise life?"

"It is God's gift."

"Therefore not to be despised?"

"What God gives He has the right to take away at His good pleasure."

"I don't wish to distress you. You are a brave woman."

"A very weak one," she said, aroused by something unexpected in the interrogator's manner.

"I ask you to summon all your strength, all your fortitude, to encourage your dearest hopes. I am about to put your strength and hope and courage to a severe test."

Mathilde's heart began to beat with a strange and sudden sympathy towards the speaker. She looked at him, as her mother had done, more than once, but he bent his head over his papers.

"You have no positive proof of your husband's death?"

"You saw him buried."

"I saw him buried? When?"

"During the massacres of September. Oh, don't torture me!"

Whereas she had previously stood in an attitude of resignation, she was now alert and energetic.

"Supposing it were not true?"

De Fournier acted the Grébauval voice and manner to the life. It was necessary at the moment.

"If you have a spark of manhood in you, Citizen Grébauval," she answered, "you will not add a new terror to the death that I feel is before me."

"I am not insensible to pity," he replied; "and let me at once at least relieve you of one fear; you are not destined for the guillotine. Calm yourself; I have every reason to believe that your husband lives."

"Oh, my God!" she exclaimed. "Then why is it from you, his bitterest enemy and mine, that I am to hear such tidings? What are you going to do with me? Oh, Henri! Henri! if you could only hear me!"

De Fournier rose from his chair.

She turned as if to fly.

"No! No! Don't approach me! You have set me on the rack; let me suffer, but——"

"Madame," said de Fournier, "countess, be calm. Where is your courage? I am your friend, believe me. I am not the Grébauval you knew last night. Listen: for God's sake, listen."

Mathilde, with a strange light in her eyes, staggered to the bar and leaned against it, flushed for a moment, then pale as death.

"I am listening," she said, in a fearful whisper; "I am listening."

"I tell you I am not the man you met last night," he said, slowly, measuring his words and gradually changing his tone from Grébauval to de Fournier as he approached her. "I—am—here—to—give—you—back—your—husband!"

She clutched the chair by her side, trembling with a wild, mad hope.

"I—said—your—husband," continued de Fournier, in his most affectionate tones, and at last bursting out with the question, as he stretched out his arms towards her, "Mathilde, my wife—Mathilde, don't you know me?"

"Henri! Henri!" she cried, and fell into his arms.

At which embarrassing moment, either by design or attracted by Mathilde's cry of exultation, Citizen Robespierre entered the room.

De Fournier was equal to the occasion.

"No violence, I hope," said Robespierre, raising his eye-glass: and at the same moment there entered Marie and Jaffray, followed by the duchess and Pierre, with the officer of the court.

"Only violence of words, Citizen Robespierre," said de Fournier, with a well-mimicked Grébauval chuckle. "Madame consents; we leave France at once."

"The Conciergerie has arguments that Cupid cannot answer," said Robespierre. "I congratulate you, Grébauval—and you, Citoyenne Fournier."

Mathilde averted her head and burst into tears as Robespierre kissed her hand.

They were tears of overwhelming joy, but of inestimable value at the moment,—betokening very oppo-

site feelings to the principal lookers-on, more especially to Robespierre.

"Nay, do not weep," said the Incorruptible. "Life is a carnival, and we all wear masks. What matter a change of partners, so that the dance goes on?"

"Here is your mother," said de Fournier, bringing the duchess forward and placing Mathilde in her arms.

"And the citizen with the scar across his face?" said Robespierre, fixing his sharp eyes upon Pierre.

"A patriot," de Fournier replied, "husband of the woman with the flag, the preacher of the Abbaye, the despoiler of the Louvets, the Angélique of the Revolution."

"Indeed," said Robespierre; "a remarkable woman, the mouth-piece of a long-suffering people. I saw her in the street, a grim but picturesque figure, the spirit of a great revolt."

"A martyr to France," said de Fournier. "I purpose to reward her family."

"You are a just man, Grébauval——"

"Thank you," said de Fournier.

"Sometimes," said Robespierre, "you are quick to catch a compliment."

"From lips that are above the suspicion of insincerity," de Fournier replied.

"Adieu," said Robespierre. "Mesdames, farewell. Don't make our colleague's mission a holiday; remember that the sun only really shines in Paris."

"Adieu, Citizen Robespierre; and take with you a mother's gratitude," said the duchess.

"Adieu, monsieur," said Mathilde, in a whisper.

And within half an hour of the door closing upon Robespierre the supposed mission to the Army was dashing through the streets of Paris, accompanied to the barriers by an escort of the Municipal Guard.

CHAPTER LIII.

PEACE.

SPRING in England. Along the Downs, by the South Foreland, you could hear the bleating of the young lambs, the song of the lark, the cries of sea-gulls, and the gruff response of daws that here and there darkened the white cliffs.

Strange, these incongruous notes; and yet they were not obtrusive. They blended with the magnificent distances of the scene. Above, the blue sky as far as the eye could range. Below, the rolling Downs, a veritable prairie of grass and young corn, dotted with buttercups and daisies; and in the air, from distant woods, fragrant suggestions of the bluebell. Lower still, edged by the cliffs, lay the sea, calm as a lake, and bordered on the horizon by the coast of France. As you approached the edge of the steep cliffs the gulls barked at you like watch-dogs. They challenged you, sentinel after sentinel, in solitary state, and in battalions.

Down in the little bay that suddenly appeared at your feet there were real watch-dogs. War had been declared by France against England and Holland. England had taken up the gage of battle, and the Duke of York had gone to the aid of the Dutch.

St. Margaret's, of which Jaffray Ellicott had given Marie Bruyset vague descriptions, was a small bay in the towering chalk. Human life and interests were represented there by two tiny houses, with gardens of proportionate size. In the gardens spring was heralded by clusters of "snow on the mountain," yellow crocuses, and daffodils. A man, bending over the fragrant earth, was setting late seed potatoes. The soil of the gardens merged into the shingle of the shore. Half a dozen men lounged in the lee of a beached lug-

ger. They were watching the sea, which was as calm as any land-locked lake.

On the right of this group of seafarers and landsmen the South Foreland rose up against the sky. To their left the beach stretched away to a vanishing point at the base of a long line of cliffs that might have been the battlements of an army, so grim and strong their outlines. In those days no red cottages, no red hotel, nestled in the dip of the chalky range. It was a stern picture, indicative of the temper of the nation that was embarking on fresh and serious enterprises by land and sea, though the sunshine fell upon it caressingly, and the gulls in ever-changing circles wheeled about the front of nature's fortresses.

The watchers in the lee of the beached boat by the South Foreland had passed the one glass of the coast-guard from hand to hand. They were observing the slow progress of a well-handled barque that was tacking in the sun, courting every vagrant whiff of breeze that might be won by the flapping sails in so calm an atmosphere. She was a merchantman, to all appearance, but with a long gun on deck, capable of easy offence or defence. She flew the British flag, and her watchers professed to discover in her build unmistakable tokens of a Thames yard. Her movements were, nevertheless, somewhat unusual, and she might possibly be an enemy, after all.

While the watchers ashore observed the oncoming vessel, six passengers on board The Dolphin examined the little bay, and with peculiar emotions. They were Count de Fournier and his countess, Mathilde; Jaffray Ellicott and his wife, Marie; the Duchess de Louvet, and Pierre Grappin. The duchess was a widow, Pierre a widower. This touch of a fellow-feeling had brought them much together during their short voyage. Pierre Grappin had not trespassed upon the duchess's condescension in regarding him as a fellow-mourner. He respected himself; therefore he respected the duchess. He had known and admired the duke; therefore he honoured his memory. While the duchess found consolation in recounting to Pierre the many rare qualities

of the duke, which she confessed she had not sufficiently appreciated during his li e, Pierre comforted himself with reminiscences of Madame Grappin when she was a girl and sung with the choir in the Convent of St. Ursula.

With the echoing din of the tocsin in their ears, and the shadow of the guillotine clouding their spirits, the voyagers had in opposition the music of the voices they loved and the fresh air of freedom. If Mathilde wept now and then, it was as much for joy as sorrow. God had been very good to them. The Blessed Virgin had watched over Henri in response to her constant prayers. The duchess was even inclined to grant the feasibility of a miraculous interposition. On the other hand, Marie Bruyset (now Marie Ellicott, by virtue of civil register and priestly blessing, achieved almost while their few belongings were being packed in the reputed deputy's carriages) claimed for Jaffray all the praise that de Fournier bestowed on his intelligence, his skill, and his courage. Jaffray modestly repudiated the full share that de Fournier awarded him for their escape, and credited such wit as he had shown to his English birth, his American childhood, and his French training. It would be hard to conceive a more varied or useful education for the part which fate had destined the young fellow to play in the contest between Grébauval and de Fournier,—in the struggle of love against lust, which had ended in the triumph of Mathilde.

The proverbial repetition of history characterised the descent of The Dolphin upon the Kentish coast. Our voyagers, flying from the red hands of Robespierre, Marat, and Danton, had been preceded by compatriots who had suffered a no less bitter persecution from a royal assassin. It was here, in this very St. Margaret's Bay, that a shipload of Huguenots had landed, fugitives from the merciless bigotry of Louis XIV., as you will find duly chronicled by the historian of Canterbury, in the French chapel of whose famous cathedral there hangs a picture of the local event. The captain of The Dolphin knew nothing of the Huguenot

story, but he knew how to navigate his vessel, and how to defend her, if need were.

The barque cast anchor. The grateful passengers took leave of the captain. In addition to the sum for which he had agreed to land them, Jaffray Ellicott, the treasurer of the party, paid substantial tribute to the enterprising mariner. De Fournier gave him a ring, and the others also ventured to press upon him little tokens of their appreciation of the service he had rendered them. Nor did the sailors lack for rewards; and in return The Dolphin ran up the French flag above the English, which touched the heart of Pierre, and drew from de Fournier the fervent wish that, in alliance with her own loyal troops, England might restore freedom to France. Who could have dreamed of the heroism and self-denial that England was at that moment entering upon for the liberties of Europe?

Two boats were launched, and into them passengers and luggage were speedily lowered. The watchers on the beach strolled to the point for which the boats were making. The old man in the garden, "dibbling" his last potato, joined the party. If The Dolphin had been landing a pirate crew he would still have finished his seeding. Two women appeared at the cottage doors with half a dozen children. Lower down the beach, where the English flag drooped in the quiet air above a coast-guard hut, a sailor continued to sweep the sea with his glass.

The Dolphin's boats made for the beach, north of the Foreland. With a cheery greeting the lookers-on took a hand in pulling the boats ashore and assisting the passengers to land. Mathilde and Marie gave great sighs of relief as they stood, firm and free, upon the shingle. De Fournier looked on with a half-amused smile as his thoughts went back, for the moment, to their parting scene in Grébauval's room. Pierre stood open-mouthed while the brawny Britishers hauled the baggage ashore.

"These are my countrymen," said Jaffray, with a look of pride.

"Mon Dieu, they are giants!" Pierre replied.

The duchess sat upon a great chalk boulder that had tumbled among the sea-weed, and contemplated the scene with child-like admiration. She found it difficult to realise that it was no longer necessary to lie and intrigue, and that she was beyond the influence of the police agent's sinister warning,—"In the name of the law!"

Giving them no more time than was necessary to land their passengers and goods, the captain of The Dolphin signalled the return of his men, and the strangers began to make their first acquaintance with England and Englishmen. Master of the language, and standing upon his native shore, Jaffray Ellicott took charge of the expedition.

And the old man who was sowing potatoes took charge of Jaffray.

"There be only one house hereabouts," he said, "where such company can be accommodated; and that be at the Reach Farm; it's not more than a mile along the Downs, by the main road," pointing upwards.

"Do you call that the main road?" asked Jaffray.

"Main road be above the hill, yonder," the old man replied; "and I can take you a short cut over the Downs."

De Fournier and the rest followed, with the exception of Pierre, who remained behind to superintend the removal of the baggage.

"Do you run wi' all your might to Farmer Longden's, and tell the missus as I'm a-bringin' company as I be sure she'll 'commodate, bein' strangers and misfortunate, though not without money to pay their way," said the old man to one of the bystanders.

"Gentlefolk," added Jaffray; "say gentlefolk, and one a native of St. Margaret's."

"And which be he that's a native?" asked the old man.

"I be he," Jaffray replied, with a laugh, turning at the same time to translate what had passed and what was passing between him and the old man.

"What name?"

"Ellicott; named after my father, Jaffray," was the reply, uttered with a mixture of pride and anxiety.

"Ellicott," mused the old man; "Jaffray Ellicott,—seems to recollect the name—a bit of a farmer, did odd jobs, kept a cow and pigs; why, of course; built hisself a cottage, nigh upon the farm, old Mansell givin' him the right, and bought it of him when he 'migrated to Ameriky."

"Well, I'm his son," said Jaffray.

"You be!" exclaimed the old man. "Then, yonder's the house you was born in, on the main road to the Reach Farm."

The tears came into Jaffray's eyes,—he did not know why,—and he fell back by the side of Marie; and they all walked on in silence for some time over a straight road unfenced from what seemed to be miles of young wheat, until they came to the cottage which the old man had pointed out. It was a small house, built in the hollow of what had originally been a quarry, and from which probably the stone had been cut to build the farm-house which now came into view, nestling in a dip of the Downs, some quarter of a mile away, with white-painted windows and green gates, and thatched barns belted in by tall elms, among the bare branches of which a flock of crows were holding a spring meeting.

Mathilde nestled by de Fournier's side, and the duchess found in the old house and the great barns reminiscent memories of a place she had known as a child in Normandy; and indeed to this present day Reach Farm still suggests Norman rather than English rural architecture. Upon the old oak timbers of the great barns you may still see the initials of Farmer Longden's guests, fugitives from the horrors of Paris in 1793.

Jaffray and Marie lingered on the threshold of the little house in the hollow, which had been handed over to Longden's head man, for the farm in those days had become one of the most extensive on the coast, running inland mile after mile, in sweeps of corn and pasture, the pasture on this April day of our history dotted with sheep and lambs, the crew-yard full of cows just brought in for the milking. It was a farm such as any

man of Kent might feel proud of, and, large as it was, not too big for the personal management of the Longdens and their two daughters, assisted by a head man and a dozen hinds and women, who assembled at meal-times in the great kitchen and ate the generous fare that was produced upon the soil.

On the explanation of the old man and Jaffray, the farmer and his wife gave the strangers a hearty welcome. The windows of the best parlour were opened, and a fire was lighted in the grate, which had been cold since the Yule log had spluttered itself out at Christmas. The two Longden girls filled the warming-pans and attacked the beds in the spare rooms. Mrs. Longden spread the cloth in the parlour. Longden replenished the larder with a joint from the first lamb of the season. Dick, Tom, and Harry came to the assistance of Pierre and the beachmen from St. Margaret's with the luggage. Clean sheets, smelling of lavender, were brought forth from the linen-press. The pony, inside the spokes of the great water-wheel by the kitchen, went to work to supply both bedrooms and the table. The Reach farm-house might have been some well-appointed wayside hotel receiving guests by coach, so capable did it prove of meeting the sudden demands upon its resources.

"A welcome, not of words, but of deeds," said de Fournier to Jaffray. "At first I thought them cold, these good people; but every nation has its own methods of expression."

"When they said 'You're heartily welcome,' they meant all the words imply," said Jaffray.

"You think we Frenchmen say more than we mean?" responded de Fournier, laying his hands upon Jaffray's shoulder, with an affectionate smile. "It is not easy, even in our greater exuberance of manner and vocabulary, to put one's feelings into words—even into French words, Jaffray; but you know what we all would like you to understand about our gratitude to you."

"Supper's ready, gentlemen," said Longden, just at this moment of embarrassment for Jaffray; and, but for the slight odour of smothered lavender and the

smoke of wood in a chimney that had only just begun to get hot, the best parlour of the Reach Farm might have been the scene of daily hospitality all the year round, so admirably was the repast served by Mrs. Longden and her two pleasant daughters. It was a very happy and contented company that sat around the farmer's board, and de Fournier would not hear of Pierre being excluded, though Pierre said he would prefer to join the farm-hands in the kitchen.

"Nay, Citizen Grappin," said de Fournier; "take your seat: we are all friends together."

"If you'll drop the 'citizen,' monsieur le comte," said Pierre, "and let us get back to the honourable relations of the old régime, then I will accept the privilege of a fellow-sufferer and join the board."

"It is well said, old friend," de Fournier replied. "Come, then."

What seemed to Mrs. Longden to have threatened a serious altercation, she being utterly unacquainted with the language of the party, and only judging what might be going on by their gestures, thus ended pleasantly; and never did guests do better justice to English hospitality.

Long after supper they sat about the fire, loth to retire lest the Reach Farm should turn out to be a dream. At last, however, they slept the sleep of security, and rose the next morning to an earthly foretaste of that Paradise of the Divine Promise, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

THE END.

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